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WITH THE RUSSIAN PILGRIMS TO JERUSALEM

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TORONTO

THE VANGUARD OF A THOUSAND PILGRIMS GOING DOWN TO THE JORDAN. (See page 189.)

WITH THE
RUSSIAN PILGRIMS
TO JERUSALEM

BY

STEPHEN GRAHAM

AUTHOR OF 'A TRAMP'S SKETCHES'

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ac.

WITH 38 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS
BY THE AUTHOR, AND A MAP

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1916

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First Edition, September 1913
Reprinted October 1913, *June* 1914, *March* 1916.

PREFACE

THE journey of the Russian peasants to Jerusalem has never been described before in any language, not even in Russian. Yet it is the most significant thing in the Russian life of to-day. In the story lies a great national epic.

The adventure of which I tell was unique and splendid, a thing of a lifetime. Whatever happens to me on my wanderings over the world in the coming years, I have little doubt that even when I am old and gray I shall look back to it as the most wonderful thing I ever found on the road, the most extraordinary procession I ever stepped into. It has also been a great discovery. Jerusalem is a place of disillusion for the tourist who would like to feel himself a pilgrim, but here in the peasant world is a new road and indeed a new Jerusalem.

Portions of this work have appeared serially, the Prologue in the *English Review*, the story of the journey to Jerusalem, and of the Caravan to the River Jordan in *Harper's Magazine*. To the editors of these periodicals I desire to tender acknowledgment.

STEPHEN GRAHAM.

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I

PROLOGUE

I

I am a wanderer: I remember well
How once the city I desired to reach lay hid,
When suddenly its spires afar
Flashed through the circling clouds,
Soon the vapours closed again,
But I had seen the city, and one such glance
No darkness could obscure.

WHOEVER has wished to go has already started on the pilgrimage. And once you have started, every step upon the road is a step toward Jerusalem. Even steps which seem to have no meaning are taking you by byways and lanes to the high-road. For the heart guides the steps, and has intentions too deep for the mind to grasp at once. The true Christian is necessarily he who has the wishing heart. Therein is the Christian discerned, that *he seeks a city.* Once we have consciously known ourselves as pilgrims on the way, then all the people and the scenes about us have a new significance. They are seen in their right perspective. Upon the pilgrim's road our imperfect eyes come into focus for all earthly phenomena.

It is a long time since I wished to go. It is indeed difficult to say when I did actually begin to wish. It seems as if I had been predestined from

my birth to go. For I remember a time when I wished, but did not understand what it was I wished. I look back to those tender emotions awakened by a child's hymns—only now I know what hymns really are, songs which the pilgrims sing upon the road as they are marching to Jerusalem. I understand now why at church I looked wistfully at the procession, and why more readily than to all other melodies in the world the heart responded to march music.

In my heart was a little compass-box where an arrow always pointed steadily to Jerusalem. My mind did not know, but it knows now, for it has learned to look inward at last.

Yes, long ago I wished to go, and even long ago, to use the sweet Russian word, I *promised.* Often have I despaired since then, and given up, and yet always renewed the promises.

The pilgrim's discovery is when he looks into his own heart and finds a picture of a city there. The pilgrim's life is a journeying along the roads of the world seeking to find the city which corresponds to that picture. Often indeed he forgets the vision, and yet ever and again comes the encouraging picture, like the Comforter which, on leaving this world, our Saviour promised to His disciples.

I promised, I journeyed, and now to-day I am at Jerusalem, Jerusalem the earthly, and it seems that my pilgrimage is over. The peasants feel that when they have been to Jerusalem the serious occupations

of their life are all ended. They take their death-shrouds to Jordan, and wearing them, bathe in the sacred river. All in white, on the banks where John baptized, they look like the awakened dead on the final Resurrection morning. They spend a night in the sepulchre of Christ, and receiving the Sacred Fire, extinguish it with caps that they will wear in their coffins. They mostly hope to die in the Holy Land, preferably near the Dead Sea where the Last Judgment will take place. If indeed they must return to their native villages in Russia, it will be to put their affairs in order and await death.

It is seldom that a young pilgrim is seen in Jerusalem. But I am young and have accomplished my pilgrimage, yet do not think of dying. What then?

The fact is that in the material earthly journey we do not actually attain to the Jerusalem not built by hands: the ancient Eastern city above Jaffa, wonderful and sacred as it is, is for many of the faithful and for all the spiritually short-sighted a great disappointment. Jerusalem the earthly is a pleasure-ground for wealthy sight-seers, a place where every stone has been commercialised either by tourist agencies or greedy monks, where the very candles lit by the pious before the pictures and the shrines are put out the moment they are lit, and sold in sheaves to the Jews. The first thought of the true pilgrim on looking at Jerusalem was expressed by a peasant who said to me as we were

listening to the shrieking populace at the grave on Palm Sunday, "This is not Jerusalem." "Of a truth," I thought, "he is right; Jerusalem is not here."

Yet in a sense Jerusalem was there all the time even among the disgraceful scenes at the Holy of holies. As a priest delicately forewarned the pilgrims going down to the muddy little Jordan river, "Do not expect anything like the Volga or the Dwina or the Dnieper. The Jordan is not grand. Much in the Holy Land wears an ordinary appearance. Remember that Jesus Himself came, not clothed in purple, remember that His life seemed very squalid and ignominious."

Jerusalem, then, has an existence independent of material appearance. That at least is the refutation of one error. Similarly, I remember the ship's carpenter on the boat which brought us was a revolutionary propagandist, and he pointed out to all and sundry how foolish it was to go pilgrimaging, told us how the monks would pick our pockets as we slept at night in the hostelry,—as indeed they did,—how the monks lived openly with women, how they had upon occasion taken possession of poor Russian peasant girls and sold them into the households of the East, how the monks invented innumerable fictions about the sacred things and the objects of our piety in order to get more money from the pilgrims. Yet most of us understood that our pilgrimaging was independent of all monkish ways; that we, the peasants pilgrimaging, were

all right. The holiness of Jerusalem did not take its rise from the priests and the officials, but from the actual first peasant pilgrim, Christ Himself, who was victimised by them.

I have not therefore missed my way; I have actually attained unto Jerusalem. But the point still remains—I am young. I do not think of dying on Calvary myself, I am not exactly satisfied. What then?

Youth or age signify little in the city not made by hands; for there, there is no beginning and no end. The procession to the altar is a rite in the church; the pilgrimage is a rite in the larger church of the world; life itself, the pilgrimage of pilgrimages, is a rite in the larger church of the universe—we complete in a symbolic act an eternal journey. In the mystery of the rite I shall attain unto Calvary and die there, just as at Communion I partake of the Body of Christ—or else I have not made the pilgrimage and have not entered into Communion. As the words of the mystic remind me:—

> The Cross of Golgotha thou lookest to in vain
> Unless within thy heart it be set up again.

If the question be asked, "Why do you live in the rites but not in the realities of life?" it is because the rites are more real. They are earthly patterns of heavenly things. Our life itself we confidently understand to be a rite. By virtue of our mystery we cannot lift a hand to do the most ordinary

thing, but we make thereby mysterious signs and enter into symbolic relationship with the universe of the unseen.

II

The pilgrims all call one another brother (*brāt*), father (*àtets*), uncle (*dyadya*), or grandfather (*dyèd*)—according to the relative ages of the one addressing and the one addressed. There was a dear old *dyadya* from Tver province who talked with me. He had been within earshot of the propagandism of the ship's carpenter, so I comforted him—God saw the peasant and understood. "Ah, yes," he rejoined with affection, though he had never seen me in his life before, and even then we were speaking in the dark, "it cannot but mean much to *us* that we journey to the land where God died. He will certainly soften towards us when we come before Him, and He remembers that we journeyed to the grave. . . . And think what He suffered. What are our sufferings beside His! They point out to us the hardships of the journey, but our suffering is little. It is good for us to suffer. I wouldn't take advantage of comforts. I wouldn't give up my share of suffering. . . ."

On that little boat, the *Lazarus*, scarcely bigger than a Thames steamer, having accommodation for only twenty-one first-class passengers, twenty-seven second, and sixty third, there were, beyond the usual swarm of Turks, Arabs, and Syrians

making short journeys in the Levant, 560 peasant pilgrims. Four hundred of them slept in the dark and filthy recesses of the ship's hold, and the remainder on the open deck. Fulfilling its commercial obligations, the vessel took fifteen days to make the voyage from the Black Sea to Jaffa. The peasants were mostly in sheepskins, and nearly all the time the sun blazed down upon them. We had two sharp storms, and the peasants, most of whom had never seen the sea before, were terribly unwell. In one storm, when the masts were broken, the hold where the peasants rolled over one another like corpses, or grasped at one another like madmen, was worse than any imagined pit, the stench there worse than any fire. For 560 pilgrims there were three lavatories with doors without bolts. Fitly was the boat named the *Lazarus*. I heard a priest refer to us as the Lazarus communion; his words were apt. Yet my dear old *dyadya* whispered to me on the morning before our arrival in Jaffa, "We must not complain."

After all that we went through, when we arrived at Jerusalem, I heard not a murmur but of the words, "*Slava Tebye Gospody! Slava Tebye!*" (Glory be to Thee, O God, Glory to Thee!) With eyes all wet the mouzhiks crowded into the monastery for the thanksgiving service, and the great Bible rested on the heads of the close-pressed throng—a human lectern, and more than that. And with what eagerness we pressed in to kiss in

turn the cross in the abbot's hand! As we stood afterwards, a dozen of us, about the door, a woman all in laughing tears knelt down and kissed our feet in turn and asked our forgiveness, seeing that she, a sinful woman, had reached Jerusalem.

Not only had the pilgrims lived that terrible voyage, but many of them had walked a thousand miles and more in Russia before reaching a port of embarkation. Many who were not there in body perished by the way.

Though there are many beggars who have no choice of way it is not usually through lack of means that the pilgrims have to rough it. The peasants brought with them rather more money, man for man, than the tourists in the hotels. To have twenty or thirty pounds in spare cash was quite common, to have fifty or sixty pounds not uncommon. You would never dream it to see the pilgrim's clothes, but the money is there, deep under the rags, to be used for God's purposes. It is only the degenerate peasant who pays to have himself conveyed to Jordan, to Nazareth, to Bethlehem. "Oh, what good is it to come," I heard a peasant say in the Dead Sea wilderness, "if we take no trouble over it?" He was trudging in birch-bark plaited boots which he had made in the far North and kept new to the day when he landed at Jaffa. A simple, patriarchal figure he was, with long, dense hair cut round his head by sheep-shears, and long beard and whiskers encroaching on the sanguine colour of his

high cheek-bones and well-scored temples. He was white from head to foot with the dust of the desert, even his hair was caked white, and he walked forward step by step, slowly, equably, pensively. It was at the well of Guerassim he uttered these words, a mysterious little oasis, a warm saltish spring, and over it a loving bush heavy with rhododendron blossoms.

Thus the peasant pilgrimages. On the road to Nazareth, whilst the great caravan is on the road in the third and fourth weeks of Lent, many fall down dead in the dust. They just go on and on, all white from the dust of the road, and at a turn throw up their arms and fall over dead. There is never a complaint.

I have walked many times down the steep, dark way from the Prætorium to Golgotha, where the stumblings of Christ are commemorated, and where, no matter how steady, the wayfarer is bound to stumble; and I have seen thousands of peasants come down. For want of space the Turks do not permit the actual rite, but the seeing eye needs not that to see that the back of the long-suffering Slav is bowed beneath a heavy cross of wood which he is carrying down the treacherous and narrow way to the grave.

III

That it should be with the Russian peasants that I came to Jerusalem is also symbolically true. In

the larger pilgrimage of life it is with these simple people that I have been journeying. It was the wish of the heart, the genius of seeking, that taught me to seek Jerusalem through Russia, that brought me to her simple people living in the great open spaces, lighting their candles in the little cottages and temples. At Jerusalem were hundreds of Englishmen and Americans, and the English language was as frequent in my ears as Turkish. I stood next to rich tourists from my own land; they hadn't the remotest idea that I was other than a Russian peasant, and I thought, "What luck that I didn't come with these!" But really it was not luck, but destiny.

It is hard for any one to realise himself and the appalling mystery of his steps upon the world. No matter how truly one describes the others who are journeying to Jerusalem, it is always, nevertheless, only one person who is journeying. All that he sees, however strange and separate, is but a furnishing of his soul. I remember how, when night came down upon the steamer, the ship's lanterns were lit up, and the electric lights twinkled high up on the dark masts. Over the pitch-black wallowing sea the foamy billows leapt like white wolves, and all unheedingly the boat ground forward on its straight line passage to the port which it should reach on the morrow. The first and second class passengers would be settling down for the night, the Turks in the third class spreading

bright mattresses and quilts on the deck, and improvising curtains round about their black-veiled ladies; but up in the stern would be two hundred Russian men and women with gleaming candles. In the midst of them a peasant would be reading, his deep voice resonant in a general silence, "Glory to Thee, God-chosen Mother, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and earth, glory to Thee!" two hundred voices responding "Glory to Thee!" Then the reader again, and after him the chorus, "Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!" going through the *akathisti*. The *akathisti* ended, there would follow the singing of sacred hymns and psalms till long after midnight, all sitting on the deck, all peaceful, all intensely happy. At last the singing dies away, the band disperses, and there is silence; nought is heard but the pounding of the engines and the wind in the cordage. It may be at four o'clock in the morning you get up to take a look at the sea once more; in the east the stars are turning pale, the silent boat goes forward with the regularity of a beating heart, and you feel that every one is asleep. Yet look down into the mysterious hold, go down the ladder, and step over the sleepers; away in the dark corners among the sacks embroidered with crosses you see little pictures of Jesus are hung up and candles burn before them, and the unsleeping pilgrim kneels with his bare white brow on the dark floor. In a sense it is Russia that is kneeling; in a sense it is you and I and every one.

There went a whisper round the decks one morning, "We have a mysterious passenger on board." Whether it was because of the man who said he had been in heaven for twenty-four hours, or because of some mysterious action of the exalted fanatic who slept by the carpenter's bench, or of the old man who had taken the oath of silence, I know not. It was a typical peasant rumour with no explanation but in the words—"They say . . . . there is a mysterious passenger on board." It even came to the captain's ears, for I heard him say, "There are no Russians without passports; of that at any rate I'm quite sure!" as if mystery could be explained away by a passport.

Often I thought of that rumour after we had reached Jerusalem. When the man who had been in heaven began to preach; when the aged beggar Abraham, twenty times in Jerusalem, came and sanctified our wooden beds every morning before dawn in Holy Week, burning incense in an old tin can on a stick, and making the sign of the cross over us with the dense fragrant smoke; when I saw the man all in white by the Golden Gate carrying in all weathers his lighted lamp, I always thought, "There is a mysterious pilgrim in Jerusalem." When I knelt at the Life-giving Tomb I thought once more, "There is a mysterious pilgrim in Jerusalem, there is myself. . . ."

IV

In the press of all the nations in Jerusalem at Easter it was perhaps difficult to find Jesus. Perhaps few people really tried to see Him. There was so much memorial of the sad past, so little evidence of the living present.

On Easter morning the old monk, Yevgeny, saluted me with these sad words, "Christ is risen, yes, and it is Easter, but not like the Easter when He rose! How the sun blazes! All Jerusalem is dry and will remain dry, but *then* it was fresh, and there was rain, *such* rain. You know there came a fruitful year after His death. No one had known such a summer. Everything seemed to yield double or treble increase, and there was a freshness that seemed to promise impossible things"—the monk's eye filmed; he went on, "And now it is dry . . . dry . . . it has all dried up." These were sad words, and perhaps true for the man who said them. Every man has a first Easter, and the succeeding ones are anniversaries. What was for him an anniversary was for me perhaps a first Easter or a premonition. I for my part was aware that even at Pilate's house were fruit trees laden with blossom.

Yes, Jesus was abroad in the land on Easter day, but what is more, He was actually walking those thronged Jerusalem streets in the season of Lent when I myself was there.

These were certainly aids. Did not the peasants nurse in their hearts the rumour—There is a mysterious pilgrim in Jerusalem? There was that man all in white by Herod's wall, he had that use in the symbology of Jerusalem, by him it was easier to imagine THE MAN IN THE CROWD. Jesus in His day was the man in the crowd; the man whom people clustered round, whom they pressed in to hear, the man of whom strange words or actions were expected. Thus stood Jesus silent on the feast day, the inquisitive flocking about Him and scanning His face, wondering if He would say anything or not, when all of a sudden His lips opened, and there came forth the word of God as from the lips of the oracle . . . "He stood and cried, saying, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'"

I suppose the Russian pilgrims read the gospel every day in Lent. Those who could read, read aloud; and those who could not read, listened. They lived with the *evangel*. It was possible to buy Russian guide-books to Jerusalem in the shops, but very few pilgrims bought them. They used their Bibles, and they found the sacred places by asking one another. It was marvellous how they found their way through the labyrinth of dark tunnel-like streets and alleys. And they never missed any shrine as they went, never passed a sacred stone without kissing it. With such clear

minds as they have, they will easily reconstruct Jerusalem when they get back to their villages, and their countrymen, counting them half-holy, pour in to ask them what it was like.

Jerusalem is bewildering. Tourists are tired out in three days. Indeed, it is scarcely worth while going there to be a looker-on. Unless one lives the life, Jerusalem can mean little or nothing. And even living the life, it is necessary to have the placid, receptive soul—the open house of the soul wishing to be furnished.

We find Jesus really when we cease looking at Jerusalem and allow the gospel to look into us; when we cease gazing questioningly at Jerusalem the earthly, and realise in ourselves Jerusalem the golden; when in the pure mirror of the soul is reflected the living story of Christ. Then at Bethlehem the babe is born, and over Him the bright star shines, the shepherds hear the angels sing, the old kings come travelling through the night with gifts. The child goes to Nazareth and to Jerusalem. At Jordan, the strange Greek priest baptizing by the flowing stream is veritably John. To him comes the mysterious Pilgrim: did not the heaven in one's soul bear witness! Jerusalem holds a Prophet. In indignation He whips the hawkers from the Temple; He says a final *No* to commercial Jerusalem and lives thereafter in the purged city, the city independent of material appearance. He moves among the souls of men; He gives forth

oracularly the living word of God. At Bethany, Lazarus once more steps out of the grave and sits at Martha's board, and when the pilgrims come on Palm Sunday, strewing wild flowers as they walk, and bearing on their shoulders olive branches and palms, there is truly in the midst of them the mysterious Pilgrim sitting upon an ass, and they hymn Him to Jerusalem.

The whole heart is a world, and that world is a temple. Every step and every movement is mysterious, every procession is a rite, a word, or a letter in a word, of the great poem which God reads, which is man's life.

Alas! there are strange doings in the Temple; the dark figures that mingle with the white move forward to dark ends. The Pilgrim sits at supper with eleven white ones and a dark one; the dark one goes out. The Pilgrim goes into a cypress-veiled garden and prays; the dark one comes back and kisses Him. A dark crowd with staves presses in and the Pilgrim is taken away by them. There is a choice made between Him and a robber; there is a foolish trial. Then comes a symbolism within the symbolism, like a dream within a dream, for they put upon the Pilgrim's head a crown of thorns, and on His shoulders a purple robe. They lead Him forth unto death. He carries the heavy cross down the steep dark way, and stumbles as He walks. To the same cross He is nailed, and the cross is set up. It is rooted in the lowest depths,

and it rises into the highest heaven. Upon it hangs the mysterious One all glistering white, yet shedding drops of blood. . . . Then all is lost in a darkness that not till Easter morning will disperse.

V

A rite scarcely lives as long as it is merely ecclesiastical, but when it is personal it is altogether lovely. The swinging of the censer in church one allows to pass almost unnoticed, but old Abraham burning incense over us in his old tin can melts one to tears. On Holy Thursday one looks upon the washing of the disciples' feet by the white-handed, delicate old Patriarch, but it is only a church pageant and a spectacle—the richly carpeted platform in the square of the Sepulchre, the monks each named after an apostle, the table on which stand the twelve candles, the gentle greybeard with a silk towel at his girdle washing the spotless feet with rose-scented water from a silver basin, the pageantry of the church, its gold crosses and banners, the crush of sight-seers all about. It is a different matter when an inspired peasant washes his fellow-pilgrims' feet from an old tin pail at the back of the monastery wall. It is not artistic; the feet are very dirty; it looks coarse and uninspiring, but it is real, and if you can see beyond material appearance it is lovely. It has the beauty of summer which is hidden in the rich black earth.

Surely the priests have erred by making it into a dead pageant and letting out the roof of the Sepulchre in seats for a price. They are not near to the behest, "Wash ye one another's feet." The office of humility has little in common with gold crosses and carpets. Even as a picture the rough peasant's rite was more like the original. As a reality there was no comparison, for the peasant washing the feet was the mysterious Pilgrim.

> In the days of old
> Cross of wood and bishop of gold,
> But now they have altered that law so good
> To cross of gold and bishop of wood.

Then also at the temple of Golgotha on Good Friday, and at the Sepulchre on Easter night, there were great pageants, and the accomplishment of rites ecclesiastical and no more, and though it is expressly to those places and for those times that the peasant makes his pilgrimage, he is quite content to realise the meaning of the time in his own Russian cathedral in the Russian settlement. The grave would have to be fifteen times as large as it is to accommodate the Russians materially: those whose bodies are not jammed and fixed in that terrible death-dealing crowd are at least there by faith. Obviously it is possible to be there in the body and yet not be there at all—speaking in the language of the heart. Indeed, for some it is not necessary to travel to Jerusalem the earthly at all; they find the Holy City in the village church on Easter night.

The peasant is saved by his personal realisation of holy things, by the cross which is not only in his priest's hands, but hanging from his own neck, by the ikon not only in the church but in the home, by his hospitable house and heart, by his hard-tramped pilgrimage, by his own visions and inspirations.

Thus a pilgrim who made friends with me when I arrived at Jerusalem asked at once my name, meaning by that my Christian name, and took me to the place where my "angel" was stoned. "Here he stood when they took up stones; you see the stones all about, the same stones . . . . and here on this rock stood the Mother of God on tip-toe looking on whilst they stoned him." Following him, I knelt down and kissed the places in turn.

I suppose every man whose life is a going forth upon divine adventures feels somewhere at the back of him the supporting faith of a woman. Hilda looking on, the Master-Builder climbs the scaffold and does the impossible a second time. Mary looking on, the first martyr faces his persecutors with a face catching a radiance from a hidden light. A man and a woman make one man—he is the outward limbs battling in the world; she is his steady beating heart.

The rough unshorn peasant in his old sheep-skin had not learned to read, and knew nothing of my mind or its furnishings, but he brought me there like a child.

VI

As I was tramping through the Crimea and along the Black Sea coast toward the Turkish frontier it often occurred to me that I was with the wise men, or one of them, following a star to Bethlehem. When I reached the Holy Land, Bethlehem was one of the first places that I visited; and as if Providence had smiled on me, it turned out that the day which saw me there was my own birthday.

I shall always remember the day. The March wind blew freshly over the trimly rounded stone hills outside Jerusalem, and seemed to turn over Bible pages. Every scene was like a living representation of some picture in a religious book at home. The palm started up into the sky on the horizon, the dark cypress gloomed beside grey ancient walls, brown-faced girls came carrying pots on their heads, Arabs overtook me with trains of mules. All that was new were the bent peasant women, trudging down the road with bundles cross-marked on their backs.

As I looked at the budding spring and the little children gathering wild flowers, I knew myself in a place which does not alter, the place where people are always young, and the world is always fresh and full of promise. I had indeed reached Bethlehem on my own birthday.

Some weeks later, on Easter day, as soon as the

sun had risen, I came to the Sepulchre, that second birthplace of Christ, and I measured the way from Bethlehem.

The old monk Yevgeny was with me, and we read together the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of St. John. My friend always carried about with him a great family Bible wrapped up in newspaper, and every day he found some one with whom to read and talk. It was with him that I measured the life from Bethlehem, the birthplace of the loving human child bound to be rejected by the world, to the Sepulchre, birthplace of the celestial child above us, no longer subject to our powers.

There is a marvellous tenderness revealed by St. John. One feels the tears, not shed, but in the words—words surcharged with love and sorrow. Jesus seems in this last long conversation to discover His soul, not only to His disciples but to Himself. Much becomes clear whilst He talks with them, and that which becomes clear is so poignant. He has found out the world. He also at the beginning had nursed golden hopes. He had held humanity to His breast—humanity that had waited thousands of years for His coming, for His loving, for His redeeming. I do not speak at all doctrinally—loving is redeeming: even the lowest of lost souls is saved when some one has seen, understood, and given a personal love. I think that only at moments Jesus realised his dark worldly course, and that in the intervening spaces He toiled onward as we do,

nursing those hopes which in the long-run are only vessels of tears. He averted His eyes from the cross and looked at the faces of men. At last the road became so strait that little but cross remained to look upon. He eased His bursting heart a little with those whom in all the world He had really reached and found—His own disciples. It was only a little. Even they could not be His confidants, not one of them. They were children: to Him utterly lovable, but children, not men. Jesus reached His succouring arms down to all the world, but there was not a man alive to whom He could reach up His arms, not a human neck to stand above Him for His own soft arms to twine round. He could empty His heart only to God, and shed His tears only in the bosom of the Father. What He said none can know. The life which He lived in communion with His Father, the life of His visions, the life which He realised in the mystery of His own soul, He carried away with Him beyond the cross. He carried it away to the City not made by hands, Jerusalem the heavenly. And why was He so sad, saying, "If the world hateth you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you"? He realised that the same hard road that He had trod was the way of all pilgrims.

When the sun went down in majesty on Easter eve, as if answering the behest, "Father, glorify Thy Name," there came a whisper to my ears, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

Easter eve is a sunset, but Easter morning is a celestial sunrise.

"The story was fresh, fresh," said Yevgeny, turning over the leaves of St. John dreamily, "but now it is dry, dry as a mummy. Once it was very real; we must not forget that."

For me, however, it was fresh and real now, for in myself the first pilgrim had just reached the City.

II

THE JOURNEY

I

ON THE PILGRIM BOAT

It was in the harbour at Constantinople that I found the pilgrim boat with 560 Russian peasants on board for Jaffa, an ugly ship, black as a collier, flying the yellow quarantine flag and the Russian tricolour. A Turkish boatman rowed me to the vessel over the glimmering green water of the port, and as I clambered up the gangway fifty or sixty Russians in bright blouses and old sheepskins looked down at me smiling, for they thought they recognised a fellow-countryman and a fellow-pilgrim. For I myself was in an ancient blue blouse looking like the discarded wear of an engine-driver, and on my back was all my luggage —a burden like that under which Christian is seen labouring in illustrated copies of the *Pilgrim's Progress.*

At a step I left Turkey, with its gay-coloured and noisy peoples, its bazaars and mosques, and was in Russia again, as in a populous Russian village on a market day when all the people are in the streets. All about me clustered and chattered

mouzhiks and *babas*, village men and village women, *stariks* and *starushkas*, grey-bearded grandfathers and wizened old grandmothers—all in their every-day attire. They looked as if they had left their native fields and hurried to the boat without changing a garment or washing a limb.

They were nearly all in deeply-wadded over-coats (*touloopi*), or fur-lined jackets (*polushubi*), and wore heavy, long-haired sheepskin caps or peak hats; and the women wore bundles of four or five petticoats, and who knows how many layers of thick homespun linen over their upper parts, and with thick grey shawls over their heads. For most of the pilgrims came from the cold interior of Russia and had little notion of the changing of climate.

A cluster of the curious crowded round me to question, and an aged peasant became spokesman.

"Hail, friend!"

"Hail!"

"From what province, *rab-Bozhiy* (God's slave)?"

"I come from the Don, but am not a Russian subject."

"Orthodox?"

"Orthodox."

"*Spasebo Tebye Gospody!* (Thanks be to Thee, O Lord!)"

"What's your occupation?"

"*Brodyaga* (wanderer)."

"Any money?"

"Enough."

"Are you going to the Holy Grad of Jerusalem?"

"If God grant."

"Thanks be to Thee, O Lord! Oh, what a nice young man he is, what a soft voice he has. Young man, young man, give me something for the love of God to help me to Jerusalem. I am seventy-six years and I have only two roubles (four shillings) to take me to Jerusalem and back again. I had thirty roubles (three guineas), but it has been spent; twenty-four roubles, of course, I paid for my return ticket and something more went for passport."

"More shame to you, old man," said several women. "You must have known you couldn't live on two roubles, and that you'd have to beg."

I gave him twenty copecks. "Here, grandfather, here's sixpence. I'm sorry it's not Turkish money, but somebody 'll change it for you."

The gentle patriarch took the coin and crossed himself and blessed me. Twenty copecks was much more than he expected. He was so happy and so surprised that he kept pointing me out for the rest of the journey as the man who had given him a whole twenty-copeck bit, the man whom he remembered in his prayers each night. His begging of me directly I came on board would have been a very disgusting action if he had been a more ordinary type of humanity. But he was an honourable old pilgrim who, without a thought of his

poverty, had promised God that he would make the pilgrimage. He was seventy-six years of age, as his beard, faded from grey back to rich straw-colour, testified; he was loving, by his soft eyes. He came from the province of Tobolsk, and had tramped some three or four thousand miles to Kiev; there, fearing to be late for Easter at Jerusalem, he had prayed the guard to make him a hare (*zayatchik*), *i.e.* to allow him for a few coppers to crawl under a seat and lie hid without a ticket for the rest of the journey to Odessa. I had a round ten pounds in my purse, 'twould have been a shame to refuse him. As it was, wherever I met him afterwards, in the Monastery yards, in the Jerusalem streets, or on the banks of Jordan, he always stopped short, lifted off his hat and blessed me.

I passed muster as a pilgrim and was free of the ship. We unladed sugar all day, and laded household goods destined for Mount Athos, the island of the Greek monks; and from two coal barges, one on each side of us, some forty Arab navvies worked rhythmically and filthily, scooping wet coal-slack into our coal bunkers with little two-pound baskets. The hot sun poured down upon us, and from all around came the skirling and shrieking of steam syrens, worked for the most part by passenger steamers crowded with suburban Turks in European attire reading their newspapers, going to Galata, or returning to Stamboul. They looked like the passengers on a Thames steamboat except for the

fact that on every head was a fez, and as I looked at the crowd of red caps I involuntarily thought of cricket teams and college outings.

Some pilgrims went into the town under the guidance of monks who had come from the shore, and they were conducted to the shrine of the prophet Elijah and to the Cathedral of St. Sophia, once the first church of Christendom, but now only a mosque. They saw how the frescoes of the Romans, though at one time painted out by the Saracen, had re-asserted themselves, being done in better paint. And it was a pleasant augury that Christianity should at last outlive Mahomedanism. "God grant we Russians shall take Tsargrad (Constantinople) at last, and then Sophia will be no more a mosque and the pilgrims be no longer persecuted," said an antiquated peasant to me. He had in his eyes the fervour of the Crusades.

Our decks were swarming with Turks ready to sell anything to the pilgrims, from improper post-cards to bottles of the Virgin's tears. Old rogues were displaying hand-worked (*sic*) peacock curtains to incredulous dames who beat down their prices from ten shillings (five roubles) to ten pence (forty copecks). Other rogues were selling lumps of frankincense which had the appearance of granite or of half-smelted ore. They broke it with a coal hammer and invited all and sundry to smell it and judge. There were hawkers with oranges, figs, dates, raisins, locust nuts, honey, Turkish delight,

sour milk, khalva, spring onions; hawkers of knives, scissors, pocket-books, watches, field-glasses, carpets, trousers, rugs. There was not a thing sold in the booths of the bazaars of the mainland that did not turn up in the sacks and barrows of the anxious vendors. And they all shouted at once in broken Russian:

"Money, hot money!"	(Dengy goratchy, dengy goratchy!)
"Cheap, cheap!"	(Doshevà, doshevà!)
"To whom incense?"	(Komu laddan?)
"Smell, smell!"	(Nuki, nuki!)
"To whom watches?"	(Komu chassi?)

And above all, two cobblers up in the bows struck their hammers upon the decks as they sat, business-like, anvil between their knees, and called out in pat phrase, "*Komu lokkia ruka na po-chin? Komu lokkia ruka na po-chin?*"[1] (Who's in need of a light hand at the mend? Who's in need of a light hand at the mend?)

The 560 Russians owned the boat. There were first and second class passengers, and in the third some Arabs, Albanians, Greeks, Jews, but none of these counted. The peasant pilgrims were everywhere.

Four hundred were accommodated in the parts of the hold unoccupied by cargo. I went down the dark ladders into the bowels of the ship and saw how they lived there. I had not as yet found a place for myself and cold nights were in prospect.

[1] Having a light hand is equivalent to bringing luck; see chapter in *A Tramp's Sketches* entitled "Have you a light hand?"

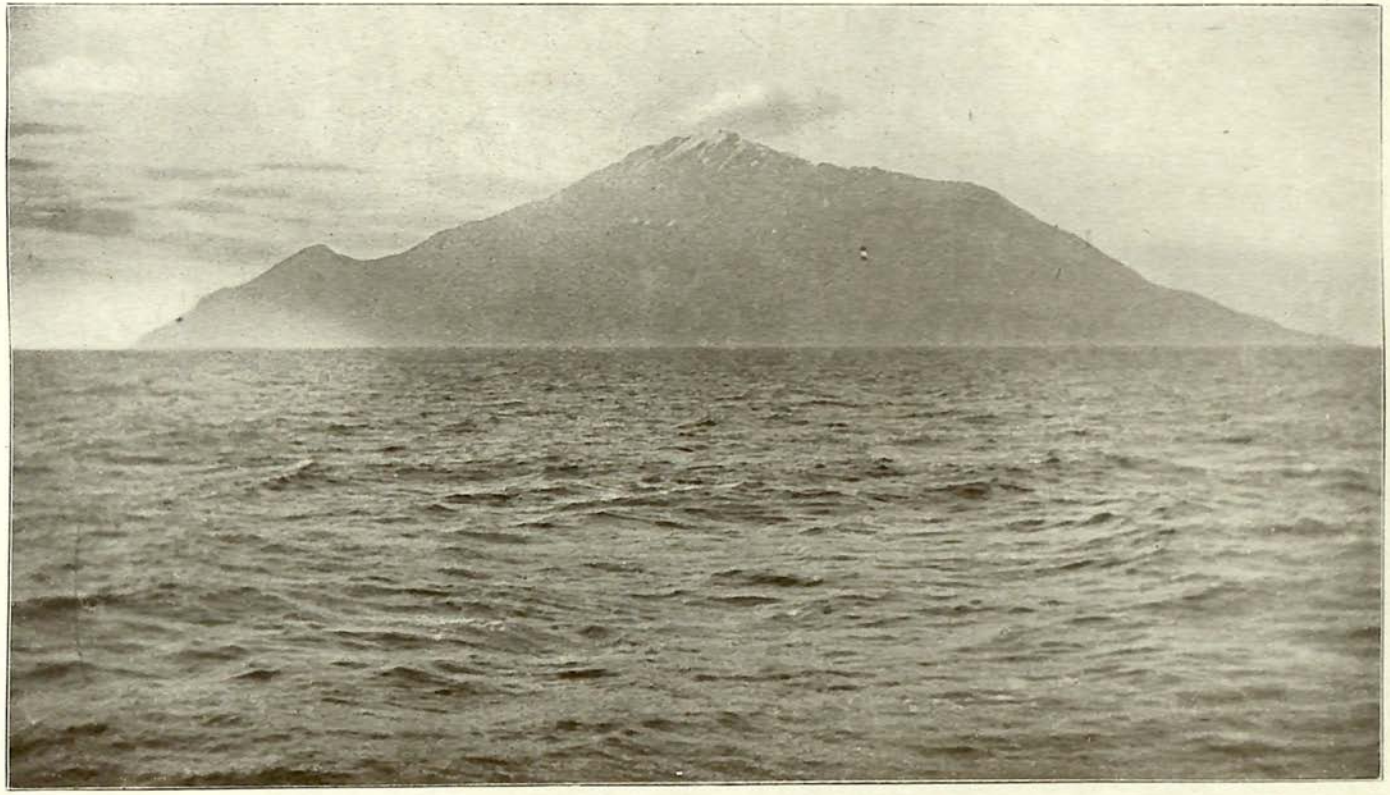
The hold was something never to be forgotten for the crush there, the darkness, the foulness, and the smell. There was first a wilderness of linen packs, hand-embroidered with crosses, with the word Jerusalem, with bears clutching sticks, with grey wolves following one another's tails round and round. Among the sacks men and women were lying, combing out their hair or examining their underclothing. As far as eye could see looking into the dark depths of the hold were bundles and pilgrims, bundles and pilgrims to the last rat-gnawn timbers where were ikons and holy pictures before which gleamed little lighted candles. Here in the most noisome recesses were the ill, the very feeble, the blind and the maimed, the sea-sick—all those who had either no power or no wish to get up and feel the air and sunshine above board. I reflected that it would in any case be impossible for me to spend the night there, even if I found room.

It was eventually on the carpenter's bench that I made my nightly couch. The day's work done, and the boat steaming placidly over the white gleaming waters of the Sea of Marmora, the carpenter had put up his tools and descended to the mess-room, there to tope and sing before turning in; and I cleared his work-bench of shavings and made myself a clean berth of planed boards, much to the astonishment of less fortunate pilgrims who had ensconced themselves on top of the provision chests, along the tops of the chicken-boxes, on

the warm but sooty roof of the engine room, in the canvas under the bell-stand, and so on . . . where not? I expected to be turned off sooner or later, but fortune was with me, for I occupied that clean if comfortless place each and all of the twelve nights spent on the sea before reaching Jaffa.

All night long the pilgrims prayed aloud and sang —they had their watches of prayer as the ship had its nautical watch, and even in the witching hours, the ikons in the hold were not without their votive pilgrims prostrating themselves and singing unto God. In the stern about two hundred of them read and sang with a priest till midnight, and after they had dispersed and each had gone to his own, there was still to be heard the pleasant, deep-bass prayers of the slaves of God.

We made the grand mountain of Athos on the morrow, and though the weather was blustering and most of the pilgrims sick, there was a grand turn out above deck even of the halt, the maimed, and the blind out of the dark depths of the hold, ready to bow to the sacred mountain where the Blessed Virgin was wrecked. The mountain rises like a great buffalo-back out of the green and blue tossing Ægean, and is of the awesome contour that must make it a place of legends and wonders in all ages. We all stood peering over one another's heads, holding on to the ropes, climbing to places of vantage, and staring at the cliff as if we expected a sign or a miracle. The Russians' eyes were wet



MOUNT ATHOS AS SEEN FROM THE BOAT.

To fill in the picture imagine the deck of the old steamer crowded with hundreds of bareheaded men and shawled peasant women, all crossing themselves and praising God.

and glistening, for they looked at a place they had heard of all their lives and of which they had seen thousands of pictures — a place to which every orthodox man had wished to pilgrimage, as had his father before him. Even the women looked on with exalted countenances, though Old Athos is forbidden to them,—the Greek monks assert that no woman has ever set foot on the island but the Virgin Mary, and of course they accept no women pilgrims. It was noticeable, however, that the monks who boarded us at the island to sell stones and relics "for a blessing" paid much more attention to the women than to the men. One monk whom I watched addressed quite a score of peasant women in the same manner :—

"What is your province?"

"Tambofsky, Moskovsky, Saratofsky, Kostromsky . . ." they would answer according to their district.

"What is your Christian name?"

"Tania," or "Maria," or "Akulina," or "Daria," would be the answer.

"The same as that of my blessed mother, now dead," the unblushing monk replied. "Ah, how I loved her; if you could only know how I loved her! And she was very like you, dear; the same sort of look about the eyes, the same chin, the same sort of shape when she was young. I remember when I first came from Afon (Athos) I brought her a string of praying beads, this sort; I took them as a gift

from an old monk, and I gave him fifty copecks to pray for my soul. It was his prayers that made God give me the vision. You know I had a vision—an angel came to me one night and said, 'Forswear the world, my son, and repair to Mount Athos. It is the wish of the holy Mother of God.' And I went. I have been a monk ever since."

"And how much do the *chotki* (praying-beads) cost, father?"

"Nothing, my dear; we take nothing whatever. But of course we have a big establishment to keep up, and if you give me anything voluntarily I shall pray for your soul."

The *baba* would solemnly take the beads and give fifty copecks without a murmur.

The day after leaving Athos we were at Salonica, and it was very pleasant to make this lazy journey under the hot Spring sun, fanned by the fresh Spring breeze. The boat was ours. We sat in groups and read the Bible aloud, those who could read—or listened, those who could not. We told stories, we sang songs and hymns; we read one another's sacred booklets; we found out the names of the islands of the Archipelago and their scriptural references; we wrote up our diaries and made the solemnest of reflections in thick pencil on thumb-marked dirty paper, thus, "It is a lie, the Black Sea is not black." "The Turks are an impudent people, thank God they are being beaten!" All went very merrily and happily. But there came a

time when all this was changed, a day, three days of storm and sickness and terror. There came such a tempest over the Mediterranean as we had never dreamed of in the squalls and occasional unpleasantnesses of the Ægean.

II

WHO HAS NOT BEEN UPON THE SEA

"WHO has not been upon the sea has never prayed to God," says the Russian proverb which I heard most frequently on the pilgrim boat. When the wind blew up at the issue of the Dardanelles, fully eighty per cent of the pilgrims were sick. The remainder, or a portion of them, a few brave spirits, sat up on the wave-swept decks eating oranges one after another with passionate credulity, thumbing their praying-beads feverishly and whispering to God, *Gospody pomilui! Gospody pomilui!* (O Lord have mercy! O Lord have mercy!)

What the packed and filthy hold was like at that time I dare not imagine. It was bad enough at my end of the ship where never less than fifty pilgrims were waiting in front of the three boltless lavatory doors—for all the six or seven hundred passengers only these three lavatories were provided. All day the people were unhappy, all day the sailors swore. Yet it was not a bad storm, and in the evening God heard the prayers of His "faithful slaves," and the tumult of the waters died gradually

away, the wind dropped and there was perfect calm. "God has saved us," said one of my neighbours, and I smiled though I did not contradict. There was for all of us one battle yet untried, and it was to reduce many, including my neighbour, to a doubting of God's providence.

As we steamed out of the Gulf of Smyrna and I lay looking out at the sea from the carpenter's bench, the full moon rose like a blood-red lantern out of the East; she changed to gold and then to silver. In the hold there was singing; above deck there was that pleasant contentment that comes after a long day in the sun when every one is settling down to sleep. No one paid any attention to the tumultuous-looking, jagged-peaked cloud bank in the West; only now and then a sailor would ejaculate, "There is trouble coming; now there is weather, but soon there will be no weather at all."

About midnight, when we turned south between Chios and the mainland, the wind at the force of a hurricane leapt upon us out of the clouds, and tore along our decks with a noise as of the stampeding of thousands of wild beasts. In a moment the improvised canvas shelters, rigged up over the cover of the hold, were ripped up and torn to ribbons as a sheet would be if put up for a sail on a boat. The sea, which had been rising and tossing for about an hour, writhed under the onslaught of the gale, and rose after it as if hurrying to revenge. The boat began to pitch. Those pilgrims who had

fallen asleep waked to pray; those who had been praying all the while ceased their devotions and tried to go to sleep. I stuck my foot in the vice of the bench and tried to avoid being thrown against the oily engine of the crane confronting me.

At Chios we dropped two anchors, took one passenger, and waited three hours. The gale raged unabatedly the whole night, indeed whilst we waited at anchor it increased. It roared. I left my bench and climbed up to the look-out deck just to see what it felt like, but there was no facing it, and the waves leaped over the sides of the ship like white tigers. At dawn we steamed south to Samos, Cos, and Rhodes, pitching all day and blown by a headwind that no pilgrim could face. There were about four hundred women on board, and every single one of them was sick, and there were not fifty men who had not suffered. At Rhodes the wind moderated, but as we issued from the Ægean to the Mediterranean the whole movement of the ship altered from a diving and shuddering to rolling and tumbling. We were making eastward for Mersina and the Gulf of Iskenderoon in the very angle of the Levant. All night we rolled. The bags and baskets rolled, the utensils in the kitchens rolled and clattered, the pilgrims rolled and prayed, and moaned and shrieked. Even the crew, a Russian one, was ill. And no mercy was vouchsafed. All next day we rolled on a tumultuous heavy swell. It was an enigma to me why we took so long to reach Mersina.

"Are we not thirty-six hours late?" I said to the second officer. "Why do we spend so much time in these little bays?"

"That's because it's rough," said he. "Whenever the sea gets up we go in close to the shore so as to be near land in case of any eventuality. The vessel is not new. It is very reliable, but it dates 1860. Now if the weather were calm we might venture out at sea a little and make a straight course."

We were coasting a grand shore where the cliffs, though sub-tropical at their base, were snow-crested at their summits. It was more barren, more desolate, more awe-inspiring than anything on the Black Sea, even on the Caucasian and Crimean coasts. For hundreds of miles there was not a town, not even a large village, not a creek, not a pier, and we watched the high seas hurl themselves in majesty on an endless succession of rocks. It seemed to me we should stand little chance if the storm got the better of our ship and we were forced to take to our three little boats.

Next night the wind rose again, our masts broke, the seas washed over us and soaked us to the skin. In the hold, where many of the peasants raved like maniacs, there was a considerable quantity of sea-water. The waves leaped over the funnels, they smashed the glass roof of the second-class cabin, they washed one of the boats away. We seemed to be making no progress, to be even at times going

astern. At last I heard a sailor say, "It's not in our hands any longer." The captain, who was a simple-minded Russian, asked the pilgrims to pray for the safety of the ship. Then a priest had a happy thought, and asked the captain for permission to invite the pilgrims to subscribe for an ikon of St. Nicholas the Wonder-worker. The distressed captain started the fund with a rouble, and the priest borrowed the metal slop-basin of a samovar and set off on his wonderful mission.

"The captain says we are going to the bottom in a quarter of an hour," said the priest, "but I have prayed to willing St. Nicholas and promised him a rich ikon if we get safely to land once more. What will you give?"

The peasants put in ten-rouble bits, and twenty-five-rouble notes, and bags full of silver and copper. They put in fifties and hundreds of roubles, all that they had. "What is money beside life?" they said. "Take all that we have!"

Then the priest, who was quick-witted enough, saw that such a collection would be an impossibility to hold should the storm die down, and he returned and gave back the money, taking only sixpence from each. "If the storm abates you will be in as bad a plight as ever if you have no money," said he. Despite even that many pilgrims stuffed notes into his pockets unobserved.

When he had collected sixpence all round he held a service and said prayers. The pilgrims became

strangely calm, and it seemed as if indeed St. Nicholas had intervened. The wind was as strong and the sea as heavy, but somehow the ship seemed to have more mastery. The captain bawled orders through the megaphone: evidently all hope was not lost. Next morning the wind went down, and though the rolling of the ship was terrible the pilgrims believed that their prayers had been answered. At four knots an hour, we crawled to the green harbour of Mersina, where we remained till there was calm once more. The pilgrims thanked God. They recovered from their sickness. They crept out into the sunshine and smiled again like little children. They chuckled over the story they would carry back to all their stay-at-home neighbours in their native villages. Yes, truly, he who has not been upon the sea has never prayed to God.

III

A STRANGE BOAT-LOAD

We were a strange boat-load over and above the fifty respectable first and second class passengers and the pilgrims. At Mount Athos we took aboard a bound madman. He lay roped in his bed on the open deck, and gibbered, cursed, spat, stared into vacancy with protruding bloodshot eyes, and followed with terror-struck gaze imaginary phantasms floating in the air about him. He attracted attention by his terrible hoarse shouts. When you came up to him you were aware of a raving maniac. He bawled, he foamed; a wave of light passed over his face and its aspect changed from the rage of a fiend to the placidity of a little child, a baby. In a moment the devil had him again and his eyes glazed in frantic preoccupation. He began to live in a noonday nightmare; his lips parted in wonder, his eyes lighted as if he were about to receive the prize of the earth; on his lips hung an amorous smile, tears of joy rolled down his cheek; he opened his mouth wider, wider, wider; his dream failed him, his jaw dropped, his eyes followed some fiend invisible to

us carrying away his happiness; his whole strong body shook and strained in a paroxysm, and from the depths of his wide-opened mouth his tongue sought to spit. He cursed and bawled and foamed, went into querulous sobbing, and then again fell into a preoccupation, remote, mysterious, interior, and pallid. It was a terrible and even, I may say, a dangerous spectacle, a burden to the ship, a burden to us all. The pilgrims stared at him stupidly and crossed themselves, or were afeard of him and hid away in other parts of the ship.

We were rid of him at Smyrna, but there came on in his place a Greek-Jew showman with a barrel-organ, three apes, and a bull with two mouths. The bull was crowned about the brows with blue beads and tiger shells, and was a veritable reality, having an ordinary mouth, from the lower jaw of which hung a horrible second with long yellow teeth all decayed. The bull had long horns and was very vicious. There was not much in favour of the apes or against them, except that their unwashed owner allowed them to walk about the deck and borrow food of the pilgrims, and to climb up the rigging scattering vermin the while. As for the barrel-organ, it was set going on Sunday and played very secular airs, including the *Merry Widow* waltz and two or three jangling Turkish dances, to the distaste of many pilgrims.

At Alexandretti we shipped twenty-nine head of cows for Port Said, where they would be trans-shipped

for Italy. It was not a great number of cattle, but it added greatly to our multifariousness, especially as there was no room for them in the hold and they had to be accommodated on the deck. At the same calm port in the beautiful Gulf of Iskenderoon we took twenty new passengers—Russian fishermen with their nets, very rough and uncouth, but speaking Turkish like the Turks themselves, exiles who many years since had deserted a band of pilgrims and their native land in order to escape military service. They were all fine figures, swarthy, hairy, hard and daring, worth any three Turks apiece physically. Already they were speaking Russian badly, and, as I understood, they all had Syrian wives, some of them two or three wives, and had settled down to Syrian life, and were generally without regrets, vodka being cheap.

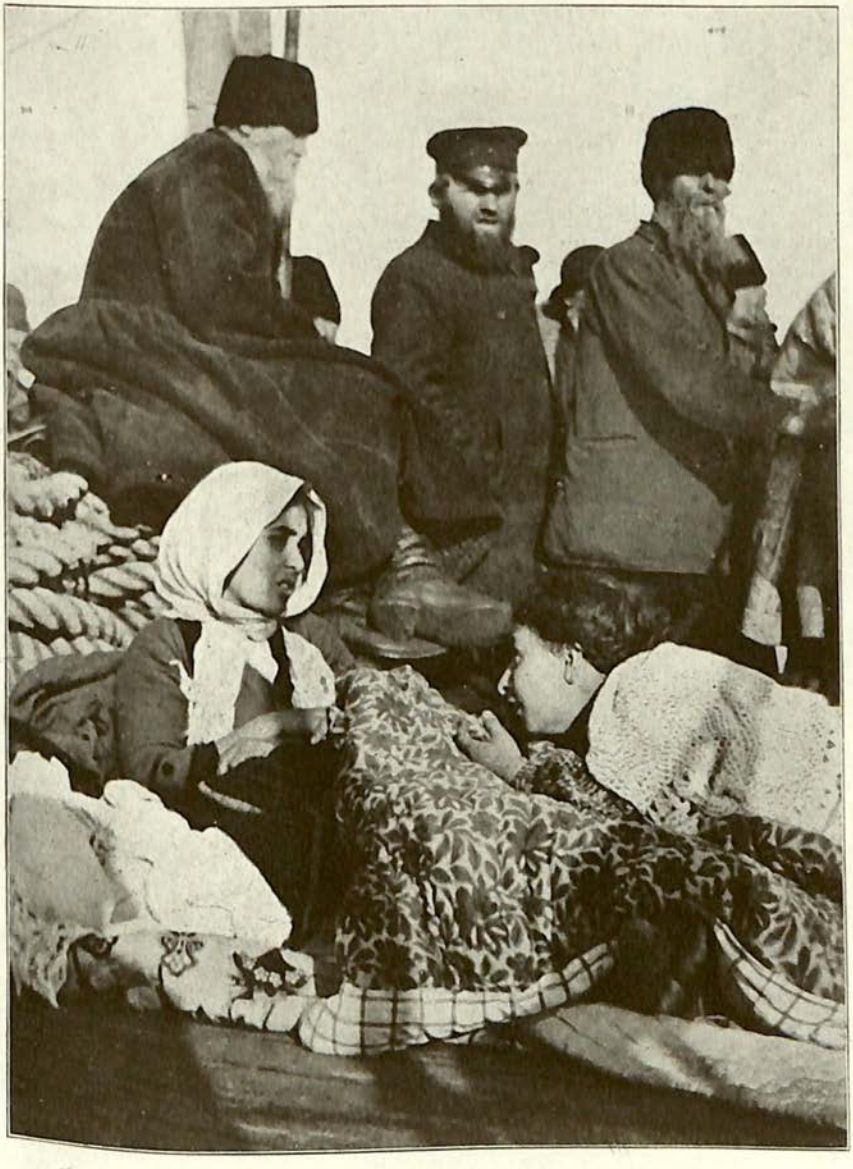
For the rest we changed our Easterns at every port. The Turks looked very funny figures beside the peasants, they in heelless slippers, the others in high jack-boots, or rags and felt roped to the knee. The typical Turkish passenger is a slim young man in voluminous brown pants over which is tied a soiled white apron, fastened at the waist with a gaudy belt; over apron and pants is a light, greeny-grey summer overcoat; on his head a black-tasselled fez jauntily cocked. At Constantinople we had fifty or so of such Turks, mostly with their veiled women and with straw pallets, gaudy mattresses and quilts on which to accommodate their families. As

we drew south to Rhodes and Iskenderoon and Syria the dresses became more bizarre, and the peasants saw stove-black Bedouin Arabs to their great astonishment; fuzzy-wuzzy Egyptian Arabs; Syrian women in baggy trousers (*sharivari*); women black as Dinah the cook, goggle-eyed, heavy ear-ringed, thick lipped, enveloped in a spotless white robe which covered the face and came down to the ankles; saucy unveiled Syrian women; women without stockings, but with gold rings on their big toes, heavy silver serpents on their ankles, and bracelets at their knees; women with nails all dyed carmine; then, turbaned men robed from head to foot in Cambridge blue, men with saffron-coloured shirts and scarlet belts, men in white, in cream, in apparently old carpets and hearthrugs, with fancy towels swathed round their brows and their middles. And it was the season of the spring onion, and every Eastern carried an onion in his hand.

One morning after a stormy night there were a dozen or so people up in the prow taking the sun. I was having my breakfast, a monk with a black rosary was saying his prayers, and about me were pilgrims and Turks looking round aimlessly. Up there came two Syrian girls who had got soaked the night before, and began to undress and put their wet clothes up to dry. They squatted down on the deck, removed their sloppy slippers, peeled from their white legs their clinging open-work stockings, stood up and dropped their wet skirts—without any

modesty certainly. One of them was pretty, as young Syrian girls usually are, and she was very free indeed, sitting in a short white cotton petticoat which flapped in the wind, and showing more of her legs than was nice or proper. I was enjoying their ways as part of the morning, when suddenly up rose the monk who had been saying his prayers, raised a denunciatory finger against the pretty girl and snorted out the word "Diavol," tramping away past her in indignation.

An Albanian standing by said to me, "Is it the *marushka* he calls 'Devil'?" I thought that it was. The girl, however, seemed unconscious of the rebuke or insult, whatever such a denunciation might be taken to be in these parts, and calmly went on removing her blouse and letting her tempestuous petticoat jump about to its heart's delight. The old monk cried out to the peasants to beware of her and seek strength against temptation. The peasants looked quite indifferent, however; they were mostly grandfathers. Nakedness was nothing to them. The Turks standing about grinned. The girl, still paying no attention, sat down again and holding a pair of dry, brown cashmere stockings embroidered with open-work flowers, began putting them on very laboriously, fitting her little damp toes into them and drawing them over her feet. The monk came right up to her and bade her "Begone, devil, evil-smelling one, shameless!" Some under-garments were hanging on the ropes of the mast to dry; he pointed to



THE SYRIAN GIRLS WHO CAUSED THE TROUBLE.

these, and spat upon the deck many times, crying out, "*Tfu! Vonuchy* (evil-smelling), *Tfu, Diavol, Tfu!*" He came over to me and said, "She shows her legs, all that a man wants to see, oh *Tfu!*"

The girl looked over at me and smiled, and despite the appeal of the old monk I smiled back. For she was pretty, and I couldn't side with the old Puritan. There was no further development. Both girls went downstairs for five minutes and returned with more clothes on; but the pretty one again sat on deck and proceeded to remove her stockings, this time to change into a pink pair. She smiled saucily, and the monk paid no more attention for the time being. However, while she had been below, a gust of wind had gained possession of her wet under-garments, and taken them rhythmically along the taut rope up to the mast-head, where they veritably shrieked in the wind. The captain very irritably gave an order to a sailor, and the next moment the latter was gingerly climbing the rope-ladder to bring down the guilty apparel. The pretty girl received it with arch smiles.

Presently a third sister appeared, and she made a great square couch up in the prow with blankets and quilts and mattresses, and the three girls lay there in a voluptuous-looking heap all day. They were hospitable damsels. The pretty one smiled to me, and stretching out a plump white arm, on which there was for ornament a heavy silver bracelet like a serviette ring, offered me a glass of wine which I

was fain to take. The monk, seeing me in such proximity to danger, suddenly came up, and taking me by the arm beguiled me away.

Next day the girls found some male friends, and I saw them very gaily disposed upon their mattresses in a snug corner below, and the boys of the buffet were kept busily going to and fro with trays of glasses and bottles of beer.

IV

THE CRUSTS

A STRANGE sight on bright days were the piles of black bread gone mouldy, exposed in the sunshine to air. Almost every pilgrim brought with him ten to twenty pounds of his native black bread—not in a block or in loaves, as might be expected, but in waste ends and crusts saved through past months from the cottage table, in some cases through past years. Each beggar-pilgrim had an inordinate supply of this *sukharee* as it is called, for when a man begs his way from village to village he gathers more crusts than coppers. It is only in the towns that money is offered him.

At ten o'clock in the morning scrubby-looking peasants would emerge from the holds with their sacks, and finding a sunny, dry spot on the deck, empty out their crusts, run their brown fingers through them, and then squatting beside them begin to select especially mouldy ones and pare them with their old knives. It amazed me to think that they could eat such stuff, as indeed it amazed many of their richer fellow-pilgrims. Yet not only were such

husks eaten; they actually formed the staple article of diet.

Hot water and salt added to these green crusts was called cabbage-soup (*borzh*)! When wood-oil and black olives were added, and the cook allowed the pilgrim's pot to simmer on his stove, it was already *prazdnitchny* (a festival diet). I have seen peasants struggling to eat the bread unsoftened, a spring onion in one hand, a great crust in the other, but as the bread was hard as brick this was a difficult matter. Commonly it was necessary to make tea and let the *sukharee* soak in the tumbler for five minutes or so.

Many pilgrims provided for their whole time in Jerusalem in this way. They pinned their faith on rye bread even when it was green outside and yellow within. Perhaps their action was rather superfluous, as their meals were fairly well looked after by the Russian authorities in the Holy City, but not every one could afford the twopence a head charged for dinner at the hostelry.

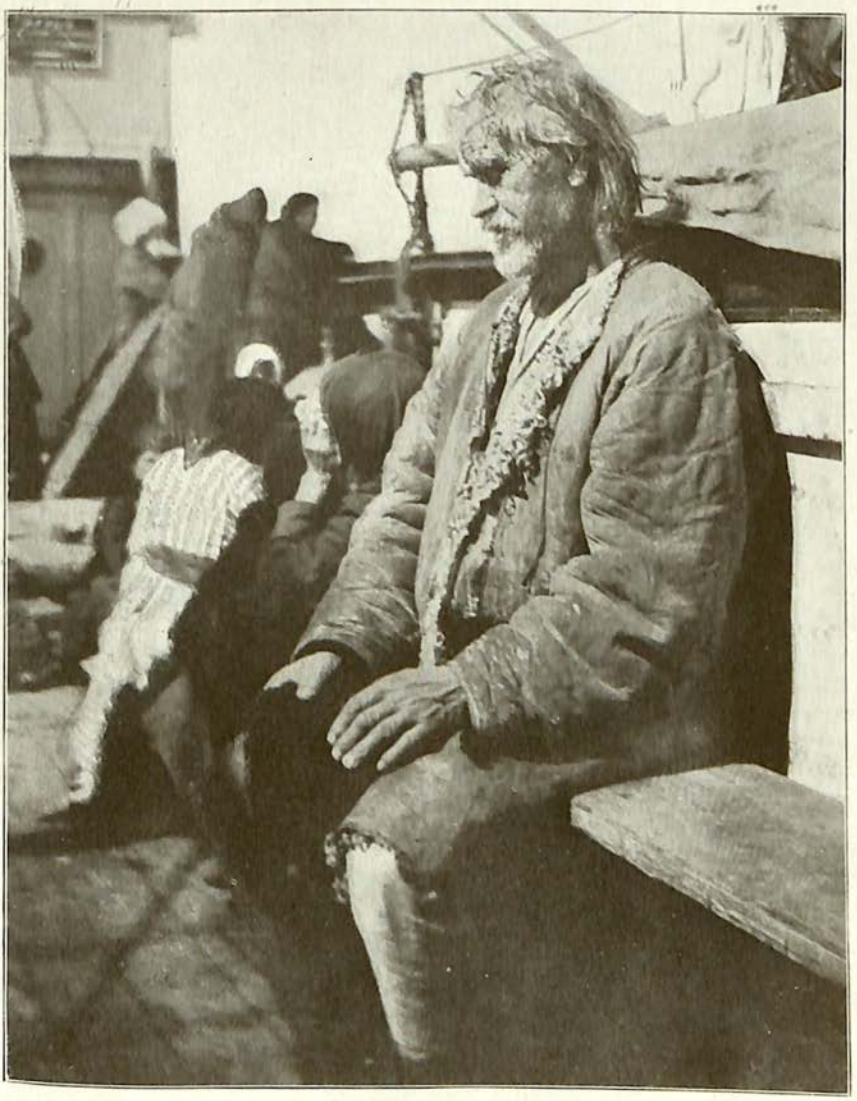
The richer peasants fared better for food. They brought their sacks of beans and potatoes from Odessa and cooked them on board, bought fast-soup at fourpence a plate from the kitchen man specially employed to cook it. They made themselves porridge, bought oranges and locust nuts galore, honey, figs, dates.

Yet for all of us the great Lenten fast, precluding not only flesh, but milk products and eggs, was a

severe trial. But for the wood-oil, which was unpalatable, not a drop of fat was allowed into the food. Bread was eaten without butter, without even dripping, nothing could be cooked for us in butter or fat, cheese was not permitted, neither were curds, cakes and biscuits were out of the question. When I think of the miles we tramped in the Holy Land, and the heat of the sun that beat down upon us, I wonder that anything of our bodies beyond skin and bone remained to take back to Russia.

Fasting, however, induces a mood which is very fit for the spiritual experiences of Jerusalem. Its greatest test and trial probably lies, not so much in the poverty of the mouzhik's food diet, he is ever used to that, but in the denial during seven weeks of tobacco and vodka. On all my journey to Jerusalem I saw not one man touch beer or spirits, and not one with a cigarette in his mouth. Yet many of the pilgrims were drunkards by their own admission. I don't think their wills were strong, but certainly their beliefs were very strong, since they enabled the peasants to say "No" to Turkish gin and cognac offered them at half the price they would have had to pay for it in Russia. At every port the temptation offered, and Turks and Arabs not only proffered the bottles, but pestered the pilgrims with them. The pilgrims would say "Go away; it is a sin. We may not drink it." The Turk would go away and come back again next minute. Then, perhaps after long haggling, the pilgrim would buy the liquor

and put it hastily at the bottom of his sack, there to lie till the end of the fast and his homeward journey from Jerusalem. Perhaps in some cases such a pilgrim would succumb to temptation and have a little drink on the quiet. I can't say, not having seen, though certainly I saw one or two pilgrims in an inebriated condition at Jerusalem in Holy Week itself. These had anticipated the feast of Easter.



A LITTLE-RUSSIAN PILGRIM IN A TEN-YEAR-OLD SHEEPSKIN.

He reminded me of Carlyle as painted by Whistler.

V

THE GOSPEL OF STUPIDITY

THE voyage was full of incident and interest. At every port some of the pilgrims descended to the ferry boats, and they had extraordinary rows with Turkish boatmen who tried to charge extortionate sums for rowing them to the mainland. The peasants were interested in every sight and sound, and didn't fail to make comparisons with their native land, commenting on the size of the buildings and the state of trade. When they saw the motor-omnibuses at Constantinople and the electric trams at Salonica they were somewhat surprised, more surprised still at the cheapness of German and English manufactured goods, most surprised of all at the cheapness of their own Russian sugar, sold at a penny per pound less in Turkey than in their native land. We strolled heavily through the bazaars of Smyrna, looking curiously at the veiled women, more curiously still at the dark beauties who were unveiled, the modern Turkish ladies dressed out in the height of fashion. We stopped and haggled at the stalls, we were not shy to crowd into the booths where gentle

craftsmen were making the wooden parts of guitars and viols, or beady-eyed smiths were setting stones in sword hilts. We tried to question the carpet weavers. We blocked up the doorway of a hat-ironing shop where scores of rusty fezes were fixed on copper hat-trees, until at last a coffee-coloured Arab busy ironing howled to us to be gone.

On board there was always some new development to the fore. Thus one day the peasant women discovered that there was hot water *ad libitum* at their disposal, and they had a washing day. They not only washed their linen, but their bodies and their skirts and blouses, and their husbands' shirts. That afternoon there was not a free square yard of deck where one could stand and not have wet shirt-tails flapping in the eyes. The crew were extremely wrathful, but as they had orders to make things as comfortable for the pilgrims as possible they could not very well interfere.

Other days were given up entirely to prayers and devotions. All the peasants were in groups reading the Bible, praying and singing together. Other days similar groups were engaged telling stories or listening to them.

One day Father Yevgeny, the monk who raised the scandal over the Syrian girls, drew a crowd of peasants round him as he sat and discoursed on the Gospels up at the prow. He was rather an Iliodor type, an extremely interesting phenomenon in modern Russia, the monk with a mission and the

fervour of a prophet of the early Church. "Forgive me, brothers," I heard him say, "I am only *malo-gramotni* (little-learned), but I speak from the soul." He beat his breast.

"I am one of you. I was an ordinary soldier in the Turkish war of 1876. I had a vision and promised myself to God. I was wounded, and when I recovered I went into a monastery. I've been a monk thirty years now, glory be to God!

"Read your Gospels, dear muzhichoks, and your Psalter, and the history of the Church, but have nothing to do with contemporary[1] writing. The Gospels gather you together in love, but the other writings force you apart. You know the one to be eternal truth, but the other you will be unable to deal with, to get right with. Remember Adam was of the earth, but Christ is of heaven!" He pointed down his open throat, signifying that the heaven he meant was the kingdom of God within. "Christ said, 'I am the Light.' As long as you hold to your Gospels you dwell in the light and live. They tell you wonderful things about the English and the Americans and the French, but in so far as these nations have departed from Christ they dwell in darkness. The French, for instance, have thrown over the Church and monasticism, and there in France now Satan is at work doing the

[1] The Russian language being much purer than the English, long words like "contemporary" are just compounds of simple Russian words, and are understood of all the people. Thus "contemporary" in Russian is *sovremeny* ("with-the-time").

most terrible things in the dark. Oh, I wouldn't live in France. . . ."

The monk gesticulated wildly.

"There, as you know, is the headquarters of the Freemasons and they operate upon England. Already England thinks of throwing over the Church. And nowadays French books and English books are being translated and thrown broadcast over Russia. You, dear muzhichoks, some of whom have learned to read, are in danger. But be advised by me. Never look at anything foreign or modern. Truth has no need to be modern. It is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and you find it in your Gospels. You know what is good from what is bad; that is your salvation. Stick to it. Modern people say everything good is a little bit bad, and everything bad has a little bit of good in it. But you know when you thresh the corn and you lift the grain shovel, the good seed remains, whiff goes the chaff."

The peasants all smiled and chortled, and the monk enjoyed a triumph, but went on forcefully :—

"When people come to you with new ideas, have nothing to do with them. Just answer, 'I'm a simple mouzhik; I'm far too stupid to understand it!' Don't you mind being stupid. The devil is the cleverest spirit in heaven and earth, much cleverer than God, but not wise, not wise. . . . If Eve had been a little stupider, oh, if she'd only been a little stupider and failed to understand the devil!

Muzhichoks dear, when they come to you tempting you with new ideas, just say, 'It's all beyond me, I'm only a poor, stupid, simple moujik, and I can't understand,' and then you go and read a chapter from your Gospel and you'll be all right."

The monk went on, enlarging on his theme and haranguing his patient and affectionate hearers, coming ever and anon to the same conclusion. He was preaching a gospel which is probably heard nowhere in the world but among the Russians, a gospel of stupidity, of dulness, in opposition to cleverness, of faith in wisdom.

. . . . . .

And all the while the monk was preaching this true-blue sermon of Russian conservatism up above, the ship's carpenter was preaching red-hot social democracy below. Strange to say, there was not a single sailor on this pilgrim boat who did not laugh at the pilgrims, did not think them fools. The crew might have been thought to be revolutionary conspirators to judge by their serious conversation. They never missed a chance to propagandise among the peasants, trying to engender hate of the Tsar and disbelief in the Church. Luckily most of the pilgrims regarded this as a sort of religious experience and testing, part of the cross they had to bear, a sort of temptation which God had permitted in order to test their worthiness.

Scores of times I overheard such words as "It's all *moshenstvo* (knavery). It's all a great exploitation.

The monks take your money and get drunk. You pay them to pray for your soul and they keep mistresses. You buy on Easter eve a fat candle costing a rouble, you light it, the monks immediately blow it out and sell it to some one else for another rouble. One candle is sold to twenty or thirty people. And the miracle of receiving the Holy Fire, it's all a fraud. The monks put a chemical powder in a cleft of the stone, and when the sun gets warm enough the powder bursts into flame of its own account like phosphorus. It pays the monks to have the miracle; thousands of roubles are paid for seats to look on at it. You'll see when you go to the sacred places the monks will chase you into cellars, where you'll find yourselves all alone, and there they'll demand all the money you have. They'll make you give them a list of every soul alive or dead in your native village in Russia, and pay at the rate of a shilling each for prayers for them. If you are a young woman, take care; they'll persuade you to enter a nunnery, they'll sell you into the Turkish harems, or do worse still, marry you themselves. . . .

"Why didn't you remain in Russia and put the money in the bank, or buy books and learn what is going on in the world? Why do you waste your time making this long journey when you might be earning good money in the fields and the towns?"

Then a peasant would answer: "I don't know. You speak too fast. It seems God didn't make man only to work and earn money, like a horse or

a cow. And did not God live and die in the land that we are going to? If the Greek monks are evil, are there not Russian ones? We will go to the Russian ones. If all are evil, the land at least is holy. It is the places that we are going to, not the people. The priests in Russia often oppress us, are often very drunken and very evil. But that doesn't make God less holy. Priests even say to us covetously, 'Why go to Jerusalem? Jerusalem is here at home. You wish God's forgiveness? Buy a twenty rouble ikon for the church and pay for prayers.' But we know such advice is evil."

The propagandist would dismiss the pilgrim with a sneer, and the latter would be left wondering how it was the sailor thought him a *durak* (block-head), and why the sailor should not be convinced by his answer.

On the other hand, the revolutionary sailors did have their successes, their two per cent who got infected by the modern talk, generally peasants whose minds had been infected by the ideas of land insurrectionism at home.

The peasants were of too antique a type to be good ground for propagandism. They were believers. What is more, they were in the full sobriety of Mid-Lent fasting, and not disposed to fire-eating. They were also honest, saving peasants who, in a lean year, had found money to go all this way. Had they been waverers from the faith it had been different—drunkards who sought not to

blame themselves for their country's evils, spendthrifts who wished to say the talents were spent in paying the taxes, or Jews who grudge every penny not given to commercial development. The hostelries of Jerusalem might then have been infernos, and the sacred places scenes of riot.

No, it was the gospel of the monk and not that of the carpenter that prevailed. The monk's gospel, be it said, is the only one allowed to be heard effectively among the Russian peasantry. And only on board ship, far from the police, could such socialistic artillery as that of the ship's carpenter be brought to bear on the peasants: if such were allowed in Russia among the people already infected with such ideas, the day of the success of social democracy[1] would be strangely hastened.

As it is, the monk's word remains, "When they come to you tempting you with new ideas, say 'It's all beyond me, I'm only a poor, stupid, simple mouzhik, and I can't understand. I'm far too stupid to understand it.' Then you read a chapter from your Gospel and you'll be all right."

[1] By social democracy I mean here the programme of the Social Democratic Party, the Russian revolutionaries.

VI

TALKS WITH THE PILGRIMS

Day crept on from dawn to dusk in converse. We became a large family, or rather a series of families. We all became known to one another and strangely intimate. The intimacy was strange because none of us had met in our lives before, and we came from the ends of the Russian earth. It was comparatively unusual for two peasants to find one another belonging to the same province, and a province in Russia has sometimes the extent of a kingdom in Western Europe. We each had our special story to give—something not familiar to our fellow-pilgrims. Thus the man from the Carpathian frontier talked with the man from the Urals, the Archangel mouzhik with the peasant from the Caucasian steppes, the pilgrim from the Dneiper with the pilgrim from the Petchora, he of old Novgorodian Russia with the Siberian from beyond Baikal. One might multiply examples. All the Russias were there, and I was glad to find myself in the midst of them.

We had homely things to tell—thus, that beef

was five copecks (a penny farthing) a pound in Samarsk Government, and potatoes fifteen copecks a pood (forty pounds); that the Baptists were increasing on the Don steppes, and bought their converts at a hundred roubles apiece, the pastors waiting at the railway stations and making each drunkard sign a paper that he had renounced orthodoxy and received a hundred roubles in exchange; that the Molokans had been trampling on the ikons in a monastery, and had therefore been flogged; that a monk in Viatka Government had prophesied the end of the world; that plague continued in Astrakhan; that the snow had been late in Little Russia this winter, and the crops might be spoiled. A peasant from Kostroma told how thirty were frozen to death on a wedding party lost in the snow. A man from above Perm told how he had been with a search party looking for a lost convict, and had come upon him kneeling in the snow as if praying, but frozen to death and stiff as a post.

There were women doing embroidery and gossiping about stitches; and veterans of the Turkish wars, one of the Crimean War, telling how they got their wounds; old pilgrims who had been to Jerusalem many times telling stories of the Sacred Fire. There was a great discussion as to whether a pilgrim sent by his village, and on behalf of his village, having only the money subscribed by the village, could really pray for his own soul at Jerusalem. Would he not have to give his whole

devotions to his village? A rather absurd discussion, for he could easily pray for each man and woman in turn including himself.

It wasn't taken very friendly to read books all by oneself, and once an old dame took a book out of my hand, saying, "Don't read so much or God will make a saint of you and take you from us. Tell us about yourself. (*Kakoï guberny?*) Which government do you come from?" And I was obliged to talk like the rest.

One of my most intimate acquaintances, and one I talked much to, was a young man from the "top" of the Ural, 500 versts north of Orenburg. He had left in January and tramped the rest of the winter. His village, he said, was surrounded by forest. One year in four nothing at all would grow in the fields, not even grass and weeds. A contrast to the black-earth districts, where year after year, without any manuring, or any rest and fallowness, the land goes on rendering abundantly.

This boy, for he was not more than twenty years old, was a handsome, open-faced fellow, strong and straight, a really beautiful figure. He had not shaved yet and never would. The little brown hairs glistened on his sunburnt cheeks. He was dressed in an ancient, rusty looking overcoat (a *touloop*) from his shoulder to his ankles. He had slept in it on the mountains and among the forests; every night on the steamer he slept in it up at the "nose" of the prow in the freshest, coldest place, and the Mediterranean

dews were nothing to him. When he reached the Holy Land he made all his journeys up country, to Nazareth, to Jordan, to Abraham's oak, and the rest on foot, and whenever I met him he seemed radiantly happy and well. I noticed at Jordan, when he stripped and got into his grave garments, that his body was clean and white like that of a child.

It was strange to see a young fellow of twenty in the midst of so many greybeards, and I rather wondered how Russia could spare him from the fields.

"Why did you decide to make the pilgrimage?" I asked him.

He blushed somewhat awkwardly as he answered, "I took cold, and whilst I was ill I promised God that I would go to the Holy Sepulchre, and that I would eat no meat and drink no wine till I reached it."

"But surely you come from a famine district; how could you find money to pay the passage on the steamer?"

He waved his hand, deprecating the notion that anything like want of money could stand in the way of the pilgrimage. Yet his answer made matters clearer.

"It's not money we lack, unfortunately. We had to sell all our horses because we had nothing to feed them with."

"And you sold them well?" I queried.

THE BOY FROM THE TOP OF THE URALS.

"Well at first, but badly afterwards. At last we sold them merely for the value of their hides. We kept our cows because they gave us milk, but at last we had to sell them also. We sold them at ridiculous prices. When we had sold everything the Government stepped in and supplied us with new cattle free of charge, and gave us daily rations of bread and fodder."

"Did many of you die?"

"Many babies and old people," he answered with a smile. "Some of the young ones got ill as I did, but none of my acquaintance died. It would take much more than that to kill us."

"And what sort of people are you?"

He replied that they were a peaceful people.

"Any robbers?"

"None. And won't be till the railway comes. I don't remember hearing of a robbery in our village. Our neighbours are the Kirghiz, and they are gentle and hospitable. The officials do not trouble us much; we are so far away. It is not so long ago that they discovered us. Twenty years ago no one knew anything about our settlement; Russian pioneers had founded the colony fifty years or more ago, and they grew their own fruits and made their own tools without any intercourse with the rest of Russia either to buy or to sell. We didn't serve in the Russian army, paid no taxes. We built our own church, but we had no priest."

"How did you manage?"

"We just used the church, and sang and prayed there as if there were a priest," he answered. "Even when you have a priest it often turns out he is drunk, or cannot take the service for some other reason."

. . . . . .

This is a typical example of the account each peasant gave of himself as he entered into conversation with his neighbour on the boat. I shall not recount all the stories seriatim. Suffice it that I got to know a score of them quite intimately, and we carried the common life enjoyed on the steamboat over to the life in the hostelries, at the monasteries, and at the shrines. We met again and again, and talked of our doings and our prospects, took advice of one another and blessings.

There remains one little amusing incident to record here. An old crone found me out one day. I was sitting on a heap of canvas scribbling down a story I had just heard. An ancient pilgrim lady came up to me and peered under the brim of my hat, saying, "Lend me a pencil, please, I have lost mine or some one has stolen it. I also am a poet."

VII

JAFFA

When it became generally known that we were taking a fortnight to make a voyage that other vessels did in four days there was a certain amount of complaint; and complaint seemed very justifiable when we had experienced one storm, and feared every evening another. Yet what a journey was ours! I for one would not have shortened it, uncomfortable as I was.

From the stepping on board at Odessa, or Sevastopol, or Batum, to the stepping off at Jaffa, each pilgrim was living and seeing each day things that most ordinary mortals miss all their lives. For they not only journeyed to the Holy Land, they visited the whole Levant on the way.

I take my mind back now, retrospectively, over the whole fortnight. I did not join the pilgrims till Constantinople, but I picture very vividly their voyage thither across the Black Sea, the warm February noon; the snouted porpoises rushing to meet the vessel, brown-backed, yellow-bellied; the strong gulls hovering above the masts; all the

overcast afternoon and evening the pilgrims watching their boat ploughing its way over the vapour-coloured water desert. The night calm, and at twelve the ship at a standstill at the entrance to the Bosphorus, where the Turkish officers came on board to see whether there were weapons stowed away in the hold. The pilgrims awake and astir before dawn saw the grandest sight in the world: the magenta-coloured waters of the strait, mist-shrouded before sunrise; the soft, dark, romantic cliffs raising themselves up stupendously on either hand; the old towers and castles scarcely visible, so high are they perched, so wan is the colour of their walls. The boat steamed up the historic water, and the sun shone through mists on to dark cypress woods and ancient cemeteries. Brown geese were swimming down below; up above, the clouds were flying. The strait is no broader than a great river, and from each bank high white and yellow houses stare across the water with uncurtained windows.

We stood at anchor on the vast stage of Constantinople harbour, and it seemed we had entered the capital of the world. The vessels of all the nations stood about us, and we listened in bewilderment to the roll of the traffic in the town and the desolating howls of the syrens.

Next morning, with a stiff breeze in our faces, we were driving along the fresh and foaming Hellespont, green hills and mountains on each side of us, ancient ruins and modern Turkish earthworks.

FROM ISLAND TO ISLAND IN THE ARCHIPELAGO.

We issued through the Dardanelles, as it were out of an open mouth, and were delivered to the wild, foam-crested Ægean. We passed many a little island and barren rock as we lifted ourselves over to Mount Athos. At the Holy island in the evening the sea gained peace, and we journeyed placidly through the night from island to island to Salonica, the dim stars looking down on us.

We had to thank the highly irrelevant commercial business of the ship for two or three extra days in the Archipelago. All one day we had Mount Athos a shadow on one side and two black pyramids of rock on the other. It was the balmy south, the air was moist and warm, the water waveless, the sky grey. We slipped from islet to islet along snowy-crested rocks and grey-breasted uplands. All day the peasants crossed themselves to the black shadow of the Holy mountain.

Next morning we were in the quiet Gulf of Smyrna, in view of the green hills and the gay white town. Most of us went out to see the town, to pay reverence to the relics of St. George, and to see the arena where early Christians were given to the beasts. We passed by ancient Ephesus, or rather the site of it, and wondered at the silence that had crept over the mouths of those who praised Diana.

We rode on the storm waves past hundreds of islands, one of them Patmos, to the ancient walled city of Rhodes. We were all too shaken to pay

much attention to the scenery, but those of us who were not sick saw the snowy ranges of Adalia and Adana, and wondered. On our weather side we saw the great black cliffs of Cyprus some fifty miles away, and on the lee the overwhelming snow-crowned cliffs of what was once Cilicia. I shall remember Mersina in the early morning —a settlement of low dwellings at the feet of blue hills, by a blue sea. A silver crescent moon was looking out of the dawn sky. The sunrise came white and glistering, and lit up the line of white houses which comprise the town, showing the few cattle on the heath beyond it, the blue hills beyond the heath, and the great snow range beyond them all. In the noontide the water turned a soft emerald green.

We steamed up the Gulf of Iskenderoon to Alexandretti, another line of white houses with spear-shaped mosques and a mission house, all low down at the very toes of high green hills. At sunset the water was black-blue, and high above the green hills there came into view crystal glittering snow peaks shining with a light that was unearthly.

"God has made the sea calm and the earth beautiful," said a peasant. "It is because we are nearing the Holy Land."

And we turned south along the beautiful Syrian coast to the amphitheatre-shaped city of Beyrout. Then in the sight of the mountains of Lebanon we ploughed the waves to the site of the ancient, and

impregnable port of Tyre, past Acre and Mount Carmel, to the city of Japhet.

As we neared Jaffa the excitement of the pilgrims was tremendous; their hearts beat feverishly. We left the Jewish town of Kaifa before sunrise one morning, and as Jaffa was the next port there was extraordinary upheaval and noise in every part of the ship. The pilgrims were all attiring themselves in clean shirts, and many were putting on new boots, for they counted it a sin to face in stained garments the land where the Author of their religion was born, or to tread upon it in old boots—albeit many had no choice of gear in this matter.

Eastern Jaffa, oldest city of the world, stood before us at noon with its clambering yellow houses and its blue water foaming over the many sunken rocks in the harbour. The ferry-boats swarmed about us, and Turks and Arabs in garish attire all yelled at the passengers at once. A burly nigger in a Turkey red jersey, on which was printed "Cook's boatman," took charge of the boat on which my party was landed—we were about seventy. It was amusing to hear the boatman addressing a German in the first class, "Da yer waant a boat, sar? Over thar. A'right, a'right!" There were eight or nine boat-loads of us, and we were rowed in across the rolling foam to the Customs, from which, without any parley or question about things to declare, we were hurried along to a Greek monastery on a cliff.

Arab boys ran alongside as we filed into the

cloisters, and they shouted in Russian "*Moskof khorosh, moskof khorosh!* (The Muscovites are good, the Muscovites are fine!)" Supercilious looking, mouldy-green camels snuffed down at us condescendingly. Greek monks hurried up to us affably with general congratulations. The money-changers rattled their boxes. The trembling, shivering beggars whimpered and gurgled round our knees. The orange and nut-cake hawkers besieged us. Yes, after many callings we had at last landed definitively, and we had reached Palestine at last. Henceforth our journeying would be on land.

III

JERUSALEM ATTAINED

I

THE DISGUISE

I TRAVELLED in disguise as one of the pilgrims themselves, and I very rarely admitted my foreign origin to any one, for I wished to hear and see just what the peasants said and just what they did—to know what they were. On the steamer, with its disarranged and bewildering life, my part was easy. There was no one in authority to say to the pilgrims that I was perhaps a dangerous character, one to avoid; and the pilgrims themselves took me for granted, because they saw me every morning, noon, and eve in converse with one of their neighbours.

Now that we had come to Jaffa the position was different. I should have to pass muster as a peasant pilgrim in the presence of Russian priests and monks, the Consul, and no doubt other officials. Soon I should be among pilgrims who had arrived before us, and who were unfamiliar with my countenance. I felt a considerable amount of trepidation, and in imagination saw myself singled out of the crowd of pilgrims, given an honourable lodging apart, or expelled as a rogue and a vagabond

—in any case removed from my friends and companions of the boat. And I wished to pass right through with the pilgrims to the very end and accomplishment of the pilgrimage.

It was some relief to observe that the Greek monks at Jaffa knew a great deal less Russian than I did, that no passports were demanded, and that we were all given the simple hospitality of the monastery without question or reserve. The lay brethren spread clean straw pallets over the stone floors of the cells; there was hot water at our disposal, and we could make ourselves tea; for the rest, there were Arab hawkers with freshly pickled gherkins and new loaves. It was not difficult to make a meal and feel comfortable for the night. The cells were mostly windowless, but high and dry, and if cold, yet airy. We looked at the sun setting beyond the rollers in the harbour, and felt ourselves in a pleasant refuge after long issue with the unfriendly waves.

As we had nearly all of us Russian money we were pestered by well-dressed money-changers wanting to give us piastres for ten-copeck bits—a disadvantageous exchange, which the peasants nevertheless were generally ready to make. As it turned out, there was little need to change Russian silver at all, for it is taken quite cheerfully by the Arabs, who are ready to quote a price for their wares in any currency, and to change francs, shillings, roubles, liras, what you like.

PILGRIMS ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM.

Next day we were going to Jerusalem, and railway tickets for that journey were distributed, many of the pilgrims taking advantage of that convenience of civilisation, the more fastidious and the poorer going on foot. Meanwhile, we hoped for a good night's rest, as we were most of us pretty low in health as a result of the arduous voyage. We heard a long vesper service in the open courts below, and lit innumerable candles before the ikons there, the monk, Yevgeny, making himself very prominent, threading the crowd and gathering in the candles of the worshippers who couldn't get through, and lighting them in front himself. I, for my part, watched the pilgrims, did as they did, and felt that still, as on the boat, I was taken for granted.

When we arrived at Jerusalem we were met on the Jaffa road by a giant Montenegrin guide in the magnificent uniform of the Russian Palestine Society —scarlet and cream cloak and riding knickers—and conducted in a huge irregular procession through the Jerusalem streets to the Russian cathedral. The heat seemed to be terrible, we were dusty and worn and over-bundled. Arab beggars, almost naked, and ugly beyond words, howled for coppers in our way, impertinent Turks clawed our bundles from our backs to carry them for a price, hawkers surrounded us with their wares. It was a difficult progress; the weak pilgrims were very hard-pressed, and many of the stronger ones took their baggage for

them and carried it as well as their own. I think we all felt a strange affection for one another coming to the surface as we actually came in sight of the ancient walls of the Holy City.

I still, however, thought somewhat diffidently of my chances of being received with the pilgrims, and it was some satisfaction to see a German tourist who levelled his kodak at me, and ran alongside of the procession to get me into focus, at length snapshot me. I showed no more interest in his action than a cow would, and I am sure he shows my photograph to his friends as that of a typical and even splendid pilgrim.

But not to delay suspense, let me say that I was actually accepted at Jerusalem. I even obtained a place in the general hostel, and slept a night or two there before I took an official into my confidence and told him my secret. By that time I had seen the life in the hostel, and I understood the whole arrangement of the peasants' time for the rest of Lent. Even if the officials thought it was very dangerous to have an Englishman living among the pilgrims — the priests and monks, unfortunately, identify England with "free thought" and advanced ideas—and if they decided I must be housed apart I knew what the pilgrims were going to do, and could manage to be with them as before. Had I not many friends, my companions on the boat? But by good fortune I obtained permission to occupy the berth I found in the hostelry up till

Palm Sunday, and later, up till Easter itself. It was also hospitality of an unusual sort. The Roman Catholics, for instance, extend the hospitality of their Jerusalem hostels only to the members of their own Church.

II

JERUSALEM ATTAINED

ALL whispering prayers to ourselves and making religious exclamations, we flocked after one another through the Jerusalem streets; in outward appearance jaded, woe-begone, and beaten, following one another's backs like cattle that have been driven from far; but in reality excited, feverish, and fluttering like so many children that have been kept up far too late to meet their father come home from long travel.

When we came to the green grass plots and the gravel paths outside the monastery, halted, and disposed our burdens on the ground, our eyes all shone; our hearts were on our sleeves. Old grey-beards, crooked and bent, straightened themselves out, as if tasting for a moment the spirit of youth, and they began to skip, almost to dance; ancient grandmothers also, none the less exalted and feverish, fussed about and chattered like maids on a festival day. We looked at one another more cordially and more lovingly than men in a crowd generally look; we were affectionate to one another,

like so many brothers or so many fathers and sons. We were in a marvellous way equalled and made a family by the fact that we had come to Jerusalem together. And there was no feeling of comparison, of superiority, among any of us, though some were rich, some poor; some lettered, some illiterate; some with clean bodies, new clothes, and naked feet, feeling it was necessary to take off their boots for the ground whereon they trod was holy; others who had not the idea even to wash their faces. There was no self-pride. It gave me the idea that after death, when, after life's pilgrimage the Russians come to the judgment seat, there will be such a feeling of brotherhood and affection that to condemn one and reward another will be an impossibility. Truly, when we love one another all our sins are forgiven.

Pleasant-faced Russian monks came out and greeted us, one of them asking me from what province I came, and rejoicing because it turned out we were from the same part of Russia. We all were glad to meet these voluntary holy exiles of Jerusalem, and to let loose the eager words of joy, and the fluttering happy irrelevancies that rushed to our lips. We crowded in at the monastery door, buying sheaves of candles and hurrying to light them before the symbols of our faith. It was wonderful to see the crowds and crowds of great round backs, of dense-haired heads, all pressing up toward the ikonastasis. When the immense Bible was brought to the monk

who should read, it rested on these heads, and those to whom the privilege fell shed tears of joy. God's faithful *happy* slaves! We sang together the "*Mnogia Lieta*"; we prayed and gave thanks to God; we came individually to a priest, kissed the cross in his hand, and were blessed.

And all these different hearts felt each its own particular joy. Each peasant, though in sheepskins, throbbed and glowed in the temple. Not only he, but the village for which he stood, and the family for which he stood, had reached Jerusalem. Each had brought an obscure life into the open—a prosaic, perhaps ugly and vicious everyday life into the presence of the Holy of holies. Every village has its saints and its sinners, its beauties and its cripples, its loving ones and its murderers, its peculiar stories of peculiar lives; and the peasant entering Jerusalem with his prayers brought all these with him. A mighty chorus went up to God of the voices of the human heart, a music not heard by the ear. It was the voice of a great nation in the presence of God.

All the year round, in twenties and fifties, the pilgrims trickle to Jerusalem, and every year at Christmas and in Lent they come in great numbers. Every year this chorus of Russia goes up to God at the shrines of Jerusalem, and it will be repeated year after year into the centuries, or until the peasantry is no more. It must be remembered it is entirely a matter of the peasants: there are no clean middle or upper class people there at all. Fortu-

nately the dirt, the hardship, and the strict Lenten fare are an insuperable obstacle for the sightseers and the merely curious. Those Russians who do come as the European and American tourists come, go to the hotels, talk in French, and are quite cut off from the peasant communion.

But why does the peasant make the pilgrimage? What sets him moving toward Jerusalem in the first place? To answer that question fully is to go very deep into the intentions of the human soul; it is a matter of profound psychology. When I have said all I can say on the question there will still remain enough unthought, unwritten matter as would fill every page of a Bible made blank for the purpose.

It is not that the priests bid them go. The Russian clergy have no passion towards the see of Jerusalem any more than the English had towards the see of Rome—there are multitudinous exceptions to this generalisation, but it must be generally agreed they don't like to see money taken out of their own parishes to be spent for religious uses elsewhere. It is not an infection. Great numbers of pilgrims do not go from one district; they arrive all together at Jerusalem because the boats are not many, and they meet at the ports of embarkation. For the rest they come singly, and at most in twos and threes, and often from the most forlorn and distant points of the Tsar's unfrequented empire. Why do they come? They promise on the bed of

sickness; they promise in unhappiness; they go to save the dying or the wicked; they go to expiate their own and others' sins. But I asked many pilgrims the question and some could not answer, some would not. Not one pilgrim gave an answer that covered his action. They knew not why they came, some force deep in them urged them—a force much deeper than their power of articulation, which in most cases communed only with their superficial selves, their outer leaves. A paragraph of Dostoievsky is illuminating. I take it from Mrs. Garnett's translation of *The Brothers Karamazof*:—

"There is a remarkable picture by the painter Kramskoi, called 'Contemplation.' There is a forest in winter, and on a roadway through the forest, in absolute stillness, stands a peasant in torn kaftan and bark boots. He stands, as it were, lost in thought. Yet he is not thinking; he is 'contemplating.' If any one touched him he would start and look at one as though awakening and bewildered. It is true he would come to himself immediately; but if he were asked what he had been thinking about, he would remember nothing. Yet probably he has hidden within himself the impression which had dominated him during the period of contemplation. Those impressions are dear to him, and no doubt he hoards them imperceptibly and even unconsciously. How and why, of course, he does not know either. He may suddenly, after hoarding impressions for many years, abandon everything and

go off to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage for his soul's salvation, or perhaps he will suddenly set fire to his native village, and perhaps do both. There are a good many 'contemplatives' among the peasantry."

Nietzsche, who was a great student of Russia through the eyes of Dostoievsky, "that profound man," noted what he called "an excess of will in Russia." The Russians are volcanoes, either extinct, quiescent, or in eruption. Below the surface even of the quietest and stupidest lies a vein of racial energy, an access to the inner fire and mystery of the spirit of man. When the spirit moves in the depths then the ways of the outward man seem strange.

The incurable drunkard of the village picks himself up out of the mire one afternoon, renounces drinking, and starts off for Jerusalem. The avaricious old mouzhik, who has been hoarding for half a century, wakens up one morning, gives all his money to some one, and sets off begging his way to a far-off shrine. The reserved and silent peasant, who has hidden his thoughts from those who loved him all his days, meets an utter stranger one afternoon, and with tears tells the story of his life, and reveals to him the secret of his heart; he also perchance starts on a pilgrimage. In Russia, as nowhere else in the world, it is the unexpected and mysterious which happens.

And what of the pilgrim who goes again and again to Jerusalem? There were many who had been three, four, five, six, as many as ten times—there was

one who had been twenty times to Jerusalem. Let me quote the words of Vassily Nikolaevitch Khitrof, who has been called "the eternal pilgrim":—

"Is it possible, you imagine, that what forces the pilgrim to go from village to village, from monastery to monastery, traversing not seldom the whole great width of Holy Russia, bearing cold and hunger, is no more than a passion towards suffering? I am deeply convinced you are altogether mistaken. Every man, however coarse and rude, has his own ideal, and also a struggle towards the achievement of that ideal, the achievement being, however, unattainable. The pilgrim's ideal is a sweet feeling of the heart in prayer. Follow his life from birth and you will find these sweet feelings began in the village church when he was a child. Ordinary life dulled them, caused their repetition to be infrequent, and he began, without knowing why perhaps, to visit neighbouring monasteries. There he caught his sweet vision again. But the ordinary things of life defeated him again, and even at the monasteries he *felt* seldom. So he went further afield. He went to far shrines, to Solovetsk, to St. Seraphim. He left home and went from village to village, and from monastery to monastery, ever further and further till he reached the holiest place on earth—the Holy City and Golgotha, where the redemption of mankind was accomplished. Further on the earth there was nowhither; it seemed that the soul had found what it wished—though it had not. Satisfied for the time

he returns to his native land, but again in a little while appears once more the unconquerable wish to go to that place where were experienced such sweet minutes. In that, it seems to me, is contained the psychology of the Russian pilgrimage. In order to be convinced, it is only necessary to stand among the Russian pilgrims at the Sepulchre, at the cradle at Bethlehem, and other sacred places. . . . I have seen many people who have not been to the Holy Land, but I have never seen one who has been once who did not wish to go again." Which in a way is a confirmation of the thought indicated in the prologue, that the pilgrimage is a rite like the procession in church, and it may be repeated many times.

But apart from this, it is true that when the peasant first felt that sweet sensation that was to lead him to Jerusalem he was really on the way. As old grandfather Jeremy said, "Directly you have wished to go, you are already on the road." When that wish first appears, what shape it takes, and whence it springs, God alone knows. Some babes smiling in their cradles are already destined to the Holy City; all babes, of every age, it seems to me, have some choice in the matter.

As we came out of the Cathedral a young peasant woman, with laughing, tear-streaming face, prostrated herself at our feet, washing them with her tears, and she asked our forgiveness that she had reached the city. The peasants were all like that, though this one spoke it out.

As we filed along to the refectory where we were to be entertained free at dinner, we were met by an ancient pilgrim, half-saint, Abraham, twenty times at Jerusalem, recognised with joy by all who also had been there before. A comical figure he looked with his fine old grey head, wrinkled brows, blue spectacles, and woman-gossip's countenance. He was bare-headed and he held a heavy staff in his hand. Standing first on one foot and then on the other, he called out in a sing-song, slobbery voice: "This way old ones, this way new ones." And every woman as she passed he kissed, sometimes ecstatically, and all over the face, other times circumspectly and soberly, according to his whims or fancy.

We passed into the refectory, a church-shaped room on whose walls and ceiling were painted life-size pictures of Bible incidents. There was not a square foot of wall or ceiling unpainted. At the head of the east wing was a glorious ikon stand with ikons framed in precious metals, ikon lamps gleaming and tapers burning. In front of the ikons was a long platform for kneeling. The pilgrims all clambered in to prostrate themselves.

The dinner waiting for us was not a banquet, nothing European, nothing from the tables of the masters, from the upper classes; it was simply an ordinary Russian village dinner of the time of the year—cabbage soup, *kasha, i.e.* boiled grain, and bread. Lack of variety was made up for by quantity, and second and third helpings were frequent. Each

ABRAHAM IS AWAITING A NEW BATCH OF PILGRIMS.

plateful of soup had in it some twenty or thirty green-black olives instead of meat. With the kasha were mugs of kvass, tasting and looking like flat stout. I don't think there were any complaints; I heard none. We had forgotten all the hardships even of the boat. The peasants certainly were enjoying their realisation of the conception of arriving at heaven. I'm sure some of them expect to be treated just in the same way when they get to heaven—to be given cabbage soup and kasha, and kvass and immense slices of bread. For I ought to say that having said thanks to God and rising from the table to file out and make way for others, the peasants all carried in their hands, of the superfluity of the feast, their half-eaten chunks of bread. It felt like some living tableau of the bringing in of the twelve basketfuls of the fragments after the miracle of feeding the five thousand. On the wall, of course, one of the pictures was of this miracle, and that accounts in part for the suggestiveness of the mouzhiks' action.

As we left the refectory we were told in a loud voice what we had to do on the morrow, and where we were now to go. I suppose some one led us out. We at the back followed other people's backs onward to the hostelry.

We picked up our bundles again as we went out, and went forward in an irregular crowd to the place of our housing. If we had arrived earlier in the year we should have been put into rooms each accommodating four or six persons, but now there

being some thousands at Jerusalem already we were accorded immense general rooms holding three to five hundred pilgrims. I went to the St. Katherine hostel and took my chance in the crowd. We went into the general room, and the overseer pointed out places to some of us: others had to find places for themselves. It was an immense glass house, with the walls and room practically all of glass—damp in winter and hot in summer, and that was obvious at a glance. The pilgrims were disposed in six long series of overhead, and on-the-ground pigeon-hole beds. It was like an exaggerated railway cloak-room, only where in the cloak-room would repose a portmanteau or a trunk, here would be a human being. But there were not many partitions; the pilgrims would all lie side by side in the night, touching one another if they liked with their arms or their feet, and there were no beds, no bedding. Over the unvarnished, unpainted wood was spread a rather muddy straw pallet, one for each pilgrim. Many pilgrims were there before us; we were not ushered into an empty room. A great ikon hung on the wall, but also little ikons were set up on the posts where the earlier pilgrims had their resting-places. On the floors was a considerable amount of dirt and refuse, orange peel and locust nut ends. It certainly was a dirty place, but the great amount of light in it rather gave the idea that it was not so bad as it looked. But what did that question matter to the mouzhiks—they were bred in dirt; to a great

extent they themselves were dirt, no one disturbs them out of that belief.

A peasant came forward, one of those who had been installed for some time, and attracted, I suppose, by something unusual in me, asked me to share his abode. He had ringed round his square of bare wood and straw pallet a red print curtain, and it seemed I was particularly fortunate. The peasant, however, was a very peculiar person.

III

THE WORK OF THE RUSSIAN PALESTINE SOCIETY

In former years the pilgrims went by sailing vessels from Odessa, Sevastopol, and Taganrog; and a great number also went on foot with poor Armenian pilgrims right through the Caucasus and Trans-Caucasia *via* Karse through Asiatic Turkey to Syria. Those in ships were often tossed about for thirty days or more, and those on land suffered incredible hardships. The Mahomedans even in the Caucasus to-day persecute Christian wayfarers. In the days preceding the Crimean War it is marvellous how many poor Russians the Turks and Arabs murdered or put to the torture. The Russian Government did not go to war with Turkey to defend its Christian subjects, but on that score alone it might have justified itself in the eyes of Europe. Not more than fifty per cent of those who set out tramping through Asia Minor ever came back to tell their tale. To set out for the Holy Land was the last thing in life, and it didn't really matter if you were killed on the way—"you

reached Jerusalem all the sooner," as Father Jeremy said.[1]

But now all that is altered. The sailing vessel is superseded, the journey has been cheapened to the standard even of the beggar's pocket, and no one thinks of making the journey by foot through Asia Minor. It is sufficient to tramp from the native villages to the port of embarkation. Many pilgrims do not even make the foot journey in Russia, but come in the fourth-class train. Some are even so degenerate as to travel third class, but then they generally do so as "hares"—under the seat and without a ticket as my old friend of Tobolsk Province had done. The consequence is that where there were once scores of pilgrims in the Holy Land there are now thousands. The journey having been so facilitated, almost every pilgrim who sets out for Palestine reaches his destination and wins safe home again, though it must be remembered that a certain type of pilgrim takes years over the journey, wandering from forest to forest and shrine to shrine, building himself a hut upon occasion, and being a hermit for a season, dawdling and praying at monasteries, passing as a half-saint, "stupid to the point of sanctity" as the Russians say, hardly ever confessing his real destiny to anybody. Many of this type die of cold and hunger or of old age in Russia. But, as I said, there are now thousands where there were scores. The quantity has in-

[1] See "The Old Pilgrim's Story" in *A Tramp's Sketches.*

creased, and as some aver, the quality has gone down. The pilgrims are not so austere as they were, not so hardened and fanatical, more out for pleasure and curiosity, less for the real purposes of religion. That may be true, comparatively speaking, and the observation made by one who has been in Jerusalem many years indicates a tendency. Doubtless when Russia is more democratised, and man's labour, clothes, travelling, and himself are all made as cheap as in England, the temper of pilgrims will be entirely altered. As yet the seven thousand pilgrims at Jerusalem are *the* seven thousand that make a nation worth to God.

A word as to the facilities. The pilgrim's ticket from Odessa costs only twelve roubles—twenty-five shillings—each way. He buys a return ticket unless he feels sure he will die before he gets back. His ticket is available a whole year, and he can break the journey where he likes, or he can get an extension to Port Said if he wishes to extend his pilgrimage to Sinai and the shrines of the desert. Each year thousands of beggars gather enough money to pay the fares. It is a remarkable fact that thousands of starved, illiterate, ragged men are able to make a tour of the Levant, which many of the wealthy would hesitate to embark upon, thinking the means at their disposal too slender.

Formerly, when the numbers of the pilgrims were less, they found hospitality in the Greek monasteries at Jerusalem, and beyond what was taken by the

monks in manifold collections the pilgrims paid nothing.

But directly the steamboats began to take the pilgrims as passengers the numbers of those who arrived at Jerusalem in Lent began to increase. There began to be a thousand and more every year, and the numbers became a great burden to the monks. National measures became necessary, and in order to get a clear idea of the situation, the late Grand Duke Constantine Nikolaevitch travelled to Jerusalem in 1859. He has been called the first Imperial pilgrim, and no doubt the Grand Duke did come to pray. Probably the Russian Court had not quite made up its mind as to whether it approved of pilgrimaging to Jerusalem; it generally objected to Russian subjects leaving their native land, being afraid of the infection of the ideas of the corrupt West. Constantine Nikolaevitch, however, enthusiastically approved of pilgrimaging, and on the strength of his approval the Imperial Treasury made a grant of five hundred thousand roubles, to which the people of Russia added another six hundred thousand, ten acres of land were bought just outside the Jerusalem walls, and building operations were commenced. In 1864 the new Trinity Cathedral was consecrated, standing like a supporter in the middle of a ring of hostelries. There was a special hostelry for monks and priests, besides the accommodation for eight hundred lay pilgrims; a hospital was built, and also a consulate.

Twenty years passed, and the number of pilgrims increased to two thousand. Then in 1881 came another Imperial pilgrim, the Grand Duke Sergey Alexandrovitch, and he originated the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society. The Society built a great hostelry, the Sergievsky, in 1889, accommodation being made therein not only for the simple people, but for all classes of society—the decent rooms, however, being let at ordinary hotel prices. The refectory and the bath-house were built. Before 1889 the pilgrims had no means of washing themselves at Jerusalem, and water was so precious that a bath was out of the question. The Society undertook canalisation and drainage, and they cut channels for a mile and a half through the Jerusalem rock, and along these washed away the otherwise accumulating filth. That was a great work; it went hand in hand with the building of cisterns to catch the rain water. It is difficult to imagine how horrible material conditions were in the dark times of no water and no drains. The Society went on to mend the broken hostelry windows and repair the rat-gnawn fittings. They made ventilation and built stoves for heating the rooms.

The hospital was enlarged, and not only took in the broken-down and the dying, but accommodated women with child. This was very advantageous, for many peasant women think a child born in Jerusalem especially holy, and they forget that their position in a strange land, after a long and terrible

THE RUSSIAN CATHEDRAL.

journey, is likely to be more dangerous than in Russia.

In the old days there was great difficulty about food, and the pilgrims lived on bread, Arabian fritters, and seeds. Now for threepence a day the pilgrim receives a typical village meal; for the Society imports all the Russian ingredients. There is now a Russian shop in the monastery yard, and there one can buy everything Russian, even the tea, duty free. If the pilgrim is too poor to afford threepence a day on his dinner he gets his plate of porridge for three-farthings.

So an interesting work of "Mother" Russia goes on. In these years seven, eight, or nine thousand peasants come every Easter, and of course once more there is little room to spare in the hostelries. In the place where a thousand should be accommodated three thousand have to find room somehow. The bath is far too small—it takes only twenty-five at a time. The refectory is often crowded to the doors. Perhaps we shall soon hear of another Imperial pilgrim.

The Society certainly does very good work. It takes upon itself a great deal of motherly care that is generally absent from such anonymous institutions. Thus each pilgrim is invited to deposit all his money with the Society, and only to take out just what he needs each day, a shilling or so as the case may be. On the morrow of the day of our arrival at Jerusalem we all went to the registration office

for that purpose. Each depositor received a receipt from the Society, and withdrawals could be plainly checked off upon it. Of course many pilgrims preferred to keep all their money upon their persons, distrusting all officials, but from every one who had the money a deposit of five roubles was exacted. This deposit was returned to us on the day we left Jerusalem, and it was held by the Society so that we should not be destitute on our return journey.

A feature of the hostelry management was that everything was contributory. The pilgrims paid very little, but they did pay something. They paid ten copecks for a bath, and I think that was twice too much—the dirtiest pilgrims were often those who had least money. The next Imperial pilgrim must look to that bath-house, and have it made bigger and cheaper. Then we paid for our boiling water, a farthing for a gallon or so, quite an amusing charge, but sufficient to preclude wastefulness, I dare say. The Society also washes your linen in its own steam laundry, and makes the most filthy rags as white as snow. Peasant women, however, undersell the official institution, and if whiteness is not your object you may as well apply to them. Finally, the Russian Government exacts its shilling or so for visés to the passports, and thereby reminds the Slav, if he needs reminding, that even in Jerusalem he is a subject of the Tsar.

We arrived in Jerusalem in the afternoon, and on

the morning of the same day, some thousand pilgrims had set off in the caravan with the Society's mounted guides and a Turkish gendarme for the shrines and wonderful places of Nazareth. Many, when they heard of it, replaced their bundles on their shoulders, and set off at once to overtake the others. We were also too late to be permitted into the bath-house that day, even though some of us procured tickets. There was nothing to do but to wait till the morrow. I put up my pack in the curtained apartment, and set out with my new-found pilgrim acquaintance and pigeon-hole host to hear a magic-lantern lecture that was being given by a priest behind the hostelries. This show was also a care of the Palestine Society. Every night, so I was told, a lecture was given, open to all, on the history of the Holy Places. The lecture was a long one, and when it had been read through once, it commenced again automatically. It went on for two or three hours every evening, and when one reader was tired another took his place. I found the matter somewhat uninspiring; the hall was practically full of listeners, but it seemed to me that more would have been gained if, when the pictures were shown, Jerusalem monks or guides had spoken freely out of their minds and hearts just what they knew about the places depicted; what had happened there originally; what had happened in the course of the centuries; what had happened to them there; what they had heard from pilgrims and neighbours; what

they thought of it or made of it. Perhaps such a harangue did take place upon occasion. If so I was unfortunate, for I always heard the same old biblical guide-book, droned out by a sleepy priest who couldn't read his scrawled manuscript by the dim flicker of the candle. Pilgrims, however, listened with unlimited patience and took ideas in, no doubt.

When we came out of the magic-lantern hall we went through all the hostelries and saw the evening toil of the pilgrims, labouring over oil stoves with pots and tea-kettles. Oil and spirit stoves were permitted in these wooden dormitories, and they constitute a grave danger, for the Society's fire-extinguishing apparatus consists of one hose, no engine and no water, though there hang in each hostelry a dozen or so mysterious bottles labelled in English, "Break this in case of fire."

Then I went into a tavern with my mysterious pilgrim acquaintance—he must have a chapter to himself later—and we drank a halfpennyworth of wine each. We sinned. After that, having gone into church to "kiss the ikons," we returned to the hostelry to sleep.

IV

THE FIRST NIGHT IN THE HOSTELRY

On board, when we had been travelling more than a week together, it suddenly occurred to me one evening, "Isn't it strange; we have no policeman on the ship, yet we live in peace and happiness, though we have five hundred and sixty peasants on board and many other poor people. It follows the policeman is perhaps not really necessary." I could not help feeling that the policeman was a superfluous person in a simple Christian community. Then I remembered his place in the town and in the village. There he is part of a trap. He is really in conjunction with the vodka shop—the vodka being the bait of the trap, and the policeman the lid which shuts down.

At Jerusalem, however, though there was no drunkenness there was, perhaps, need of police. If the Palestine Society and the clergy believe in police they ought to provide them. It is possible to understand that Christians, and above all, pilgrims, do not need other protection than the bond between

their prayers and God, but I do not really credit the authorities with such a high conception. The absence of police is simply an omission. If a pilgrim is robbed he takes his case to the Consul, or he buries it in his heart, or he forgets, or he forgives it. I fancy few forget. The Consul may report to the Turkish authorities, but commonly he does nothing of the sort. The Russian settlement is a little Russia, but without police and almost without watchmen, and all troubles are settled by the Consul and the representatives of the Society and the Church.

I felt a certain anxiety when, on the first night at Jerusalem, the time came to turn in and sleep. Since sundown the weather had become cold, the city being on a hill. I shivered somewhat when, after the magic-lantern lecture and the visits to tavern and church, I re-entered the great room where so many of us were accommodated. It was dark. Three paraffin lamps shed a miserable light round about the posts where they were hung. In distant recesses an occasional candle was alight, or an oil stove, and one discerned dim, dark shapes of heavy moujiks moving like shadows. There was a continuous mutter of prayers, a thumping of knees going down in the exercises of religion, a buzz of conversation.

My companion lit a church taper in his curtained apartment, spread a fleecy black and white sheepskin over the floor, took off his coat, and prepared to go to bed. At the back of our little tent he had

set up a picture of Jesus sitting in the stocks. The ikon, which I had not noticed hitherto, was carefully swathed with an embroidered towel, and he knelt and prayed a quarter of an hour before it. I felt shy, as you may imagine, but there came to my aid a certain sort of English resolution, for I knelt and prayed, and crossed myself, and bowed to the ground as he did, and practically at the same time.

I took some while arranging how I should sleep. I had, fortunately, two suits of clothes, and I changed from one to the other. Sleeping in one's shirt was out of the question. I spread my great-coat over my portion of the sheepskin. I fixed my pack in such a way that if any one pulled it I should infallibly waken up. As I had a pair of long stockings I drew them over my trouser legs, and put my money down at the ankles under all. I lay down and the light was put out.

Many of my boat acquaintances came along and looked in at the curtain, to the obvious distaste of my companion, but I felt rather glad of them. I chatted as long as they would. At last they came no more and there was a time of silence. There was no buzz of conversation; even the mutter of prayers died down somewhat, and I committed myself to go to sleep.

Just as I was dropping off, however, I saw the dark curtain in front of me gently moving, raising itself as it were. I stared in silence. The curtain

revealed a dark shadowy face, dense hair crowned with a biretta. It was to all appearance that of a monk. The face peered intently at my companion and at me. I feigned to be asleep, but my bed-fellow was actually snoring. The monk stretched out an arm from his robe and bent down.

"What do you want? (*Shto vam nuzhno?*)" I cried suddenly.

The monk started. My companion wakened and rubbed his eyes.

"Nothing, nothing," said the mysterious visitor. "God bless you! Good evening, Philip."

"Well, and what do you want now? Why are you prowling here?" my companion asked.

"Oh, don't be angry! You've got a visitor, I see. That's not the old one. Where's he gone?"

"To Nazareth with the caravan."

"And this is one of to-day's arrivals?"

"Yes."

"Ah, and what might your province be?" asked the monk, turning to me. He had a somewhat drunken gait. I told him I came from the Don Province, but was not born there.

"Ah!" he replied. "I know Don Province very well. We'll exchange impressions later on. I must go now, but if you'll make room, I'll come back in an hour or two and sleep."

"No room," said Philip.

The monk appealed to me.

"I can easily find another place," I said.

But neither my companion nor the monk would hear of my changing. Our mysterious visitor bade us not to put ourselves out; he would find a place at our feet, and saying that, he dropped the curtain and went away.

"Who is he?" I asked. "A friend of yours?"

"*Ne khoroshy* (He is not good)," said my companion. "He is a thief. You think he is a monk, but there you are mistaken. He is a Greek; once he was a monk at Mount Athos, but he was expelled for robbery. He went to Russia and there committed many crimes, but he got away as a pilgrim. He is wanted in Russia and there is a price on his head."

"Why is he allowed in here?"

"He isn't allowed. No monks are allowed in the hostelry. It is against the regulations. If they wish to be put up they must go to the special house for priests and monks. But, as you see, there are no doorkeepers, for the porter sleeps all day and all night."

My civilised soul wanted the police handy, but what was there to be done? I didn't relish his coming back, but I was dead tired, and besides, I had disposed my valuables in such a way that no one could rob me without first causing me to awake. I lay back and fell into a troubled sleep.

There was a disturbance in the night, but I heeded it not. Some one seemed feeling about me. The curtain rose and fell. The woman who was lying next me on the other side of the curtain

screamed, and her feet scraped on the hard pallet. I wakened some time after this, saw my companion had left me, and felt somewhat relieved. I looked outside the curtain; he was sitting on the bench next door talking with the woman. I went back and slept. . . . I wakened in perhaps an hour. The two were still talking. I felt rather surprised, but went to sleep again. It was only at dawn that I learned what had happened in the night. The monk had reappeared, taken away my companion's coat, searched it and brought it back, felt my empty pockets, and then given his attention to my neighbour. He was an adept at finding out where the peasant women keep their money, but this time, perhaps because he was drunken and unsteady, his fingers had touched too heavily the woman's bare bosom—for she kept her money in a bag fastened by a tape round her body. She had started and screamed, and the monk fled. My companion told me the story, emphasising repeatedly his opinion that the monk was *ne-khoroshy* (not at all nice). It hardly needed to be said, I thought, and I rejoiced that night number two was twelve hours' distant.

The woman, who was about thirty-five, seemed greatly alarmed, for she had two hundred roubles in her keeping. When the attempt had been made she could not sleep any more, and Philip had tried to comfort her. The long conversation had all been one of comfort. I counselled her to go at once to the registration offices and deposit every

rouble of her money. You can never be sure what will happen if it is possible for thieves to come to you disguised as monks.

We had another doubtful character in the hostelry, also a monk, but disguised as an ordinary pilgrim. He had come to make money out of the pilgrims by writing letters for them, and doing various commissions for money. Philip averred that he came by the same steamboat as he did. He had come on board at Mount Athos clad in the monk's hat and gown, but on the day after leaving the Holy island had packed his clerical outfit away, changed into ordinary Russian attire, cut off his hair, and taken his stand as an ordinary pilgrim. He made great friends with a peasant woman, who, he said, was his sister. The couple had their resting-place within sight of our curtained apartment, and they took almost exclusive charge of the treadle sewing-machine supplied for the use of all.

I said to my companion that since he knew the cases of these two monks, he ought to report the matter to the authorities. The security of thousands of simple and innocent peasants was at stake. But Philip hawed and hee'-d, and said it would be no good, and that there were three doors and only one doorkeeper, that perhaps, for all he knew, the monk with the peasant girl was an honest character. As a matter of fact, Philip, fourteen times in Jerusalem, had mysterious business of his own. He kept out of the authorities' way, but of that more anon.

V

GUIDES AND GUIDE-BOOKS

When a new boy comes to school, some other boy or boys take charge of him and show him round; they show him the features of the playground, the redoubts there to be lost and won, the trees where starlings are wont to nest; they show him the quadrangles, dormitories, studies, sanctums, the haunts of funny characters, the shop outside the grounds, the playing-fields, etc. etc.; he is served with no printed guide at the gate as he enters the school. There are no guides but the boys themselves.

It is much the same at Jerusalem where these different children are, the Russian pilgrims; when a new pilgrim comes the old ones show him round; they take him about and show him everything. The pilgrims have no *Baedeker*, indeed no such thing exists in the Russian language, though even if there did, the 60 per cent of the pilgrims who are illiterate could not profit by it.

When I saw the English and American tourists, hundreds of them, with their Arab guides and red

handbooks, I could not but be struck with the contrast between the ways of our nation and those of the peasant. Why could not the English and Americans show one another what is to be seen? Why do the visitors fail to become intimate with the settled colony of English and Americans there? Why do they think the guide with his absurd patter is more authority than a chance acquaintance who has been in Jerusalem some weeks already? Jerusalem is worth visiting by every one, even by rich commercial pagans, but not in this style, and not for these ends.

What is necessary is "the personal touch," that which the mercenary and cunning Arab has not. So artificial is the relationship between the guide and his rich customer, that all the jokes, all the Arab's seeming naïveté, the things for which you laugh at him and over him, are learnt by him beforehand, together with his guide-book recitation. Personally the Arab guide is something quite different, as I know, who have spoken to him in English, French, and Russian, and found his outward manner change completely as I seemed to change nationality. Not that guide-books or even Arab guides are utterly superfluous; they certainly may be an aid; but what is necessary is an introduction to the Holy City on altogether more intimate terms.

I for my part had never read a page of a guide-book, and I had no need to turn to one whilst I

was at Jerusalem; the pilgrims took me to the places. Later on, when I knew my way, I took some pilgrims who had come later than I, and showed them. There was just one amusing danger; there were so many English visitors that I was always expecting to run into an acquaintance and be recognised—I saw at least three people who knew me, but my disguise served.

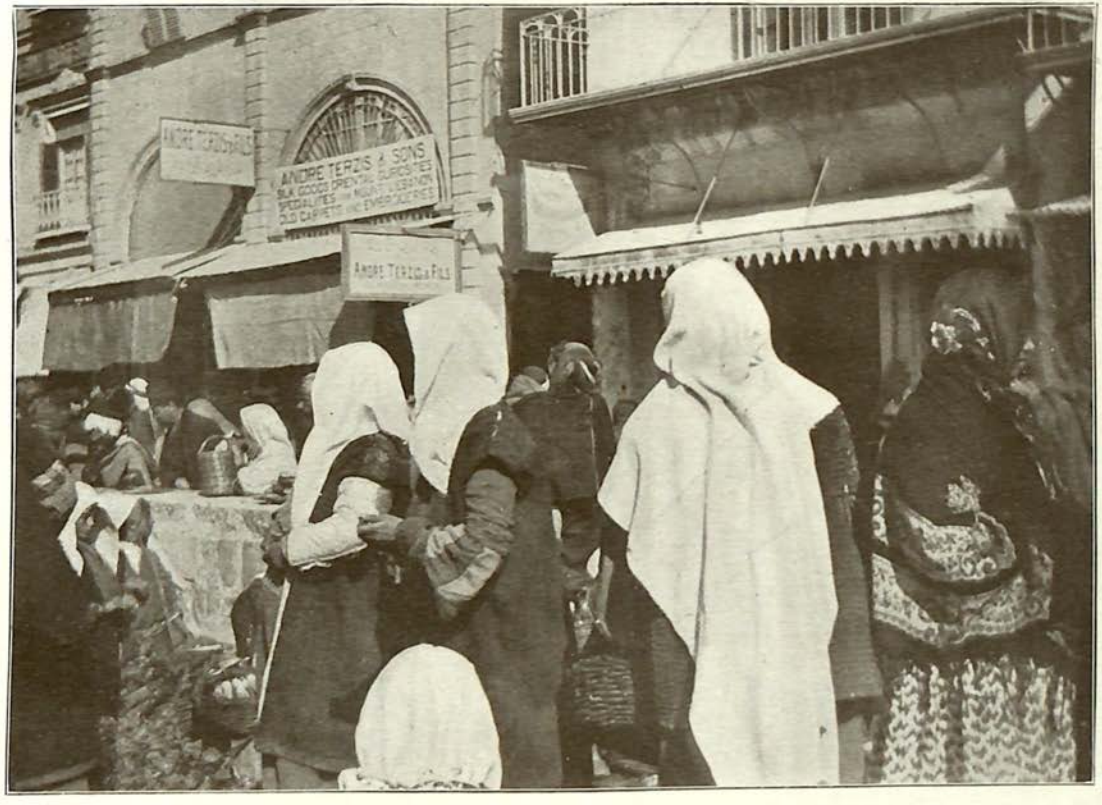
Going down the Sacred Way with a pilgrim on the first morning, we came along behind two Americans and an Arab guide. The guide was saying:—

"Kip yer hands on yer pokkits, sah, yes, all the way along hyah. This is one of the oldest bits of Jerusalem, sah; this was whar the Temple stood. If you were to begin excavations some twenty feet to the left of that wall—kip yer hands on yer pokkits—you would come upon the ruins."

The tourists, with their coats tightly buttoned up, turned about them and looked at us suspiciously.

"Stop!" said the guide. "Let them get past; you get robbed in a second down hyah, and the robber is off into the crowd before you know whah you ah."

The Americans sniffed the air as we passed them. My pilgrim, not knowing English, of course knew nothing of the little comedy. He mumbled hurriedly, "Here Jesus Christ stumbled when He was carrying the cross—you know?—and a girl gave Him a cloth to wipe His face." As I said I



THE JERUSALEM STREET.

knew, the pilgrim dived down into the cave where there is a sort of waxwork representation of the act of St. Veronica. At the moment when the guide would be resuming his archæological prattle—"prætorium here, prætorium there"—the suspected pickpocket was flat down on his breast before the ikon not made by hands.

Later on we went to the place where the monastery of St. Nicodemus is being built, and we had tea with the founder in a room off the gallery where Christ is supposed to have conversed with Nicodemus. As we came out on to the road we met two ponderous gentlemen coming up the steep way astride of little asses. They had long bamboo poles in their hands, and kept clumping the little beasts with them between the ears. A tall, bare-legged Syrian ran beside them; he wore an ancient rusty garment, tattered at the knees, and on his head a white turban.

"Come up, you brute!" said one tourist to his ass.

"Head him off there, Frank!" said the other, bashing his donkey's ears with the hollow-sounding bamboo.

"In this haas Pilate lived," said the Syrian as they passed.

"Really!" drawled the one addressed as Frank. His companion's steed had got the better of its rider, and it showed an inclination to continue its way tail foremost.

"Yes, sah," said the Syrian. "And undah this church is the dungeon whah ahr Saviour was skahged."

"Ah, dear me; that's very interesting. But give my beast a whop up behind, will you. . . . That's right! Now I tell you I'm not coming out on one of these animals again. I'll trust my feet, I reckon. Come, let's get along. Pilate's house, you say. That's interesting. Be sure and don't miss anything."

The peasant pilgrim looked solemnly at the high-mettled asses. "If you're not used to it, it's better to go on foot," he said at last. "The Frenchmen don't hit anything like hard enough."

"They're not French, but English, I think, and rather kind-hearted," I urged, laughing to myself.

"English," said the peasant, looking after them with adoration. "If I'd known that I'd have looked at them more carefully. The English are a noble people."

We went along to the old city wall, to the point where Cook's offices are and a great number of curio shops. Here a crowd was collected in the street, and my companion was curious enough to stop and stare. A photograph was being taken of a very tall, blue-eyed, fair-haired woman wearing a brass circlet on her head and triple bangles on her arms. She wore an ancient embroidered scarlet costume that would serve as a representation of Babylon at a fancy dress ball, and the somewhat

large toes of her bare feet were stuffed into little lilac-coloured Turkish slippers.

"What is she?" said the bewildered pilgrim.

"Look hard," I replied. "She's a fine English lady dressed up in the garments of beautiful dark Syrian girls as they used to dress hundreds of years ago. She has been into that shop, put off her fine things there, and changed into these. Now they're going to take her photograph. See, the photographer is coming out of the shop. There's her guide standing by her, and there's her husband, I think."

The husband seemed to be repenting that he had agreed to the affair. The crowd annoyed him. But suddenly some officious sons of the desert rushed in and cleared a space, and the photographer got a clear view of the picture.

"Ah yer reddy? Ah yer kwyte reddy?" said he.

The tall lady came more into view. I forgot to say she was wearing tight corsets under this magnificent attire, and that she had a finely developed bust like a great armful of cream roses standing above a slim curved vase. She was trying to stand at her ease, putting more of her weight on to one foot than on the other. She looked what the lady novelist calls "perfectly lovable" at that moment. And when the Eastern photographer asked if she were ready, she gave assent by looking upward with her pale-blue eyes above the people's heads, swaying her body the while.

"Thank yah," said the photographer, and the crowd closed in again. The peasant took it all in, and didn't utter a word till we started walking again. At last he rolled out his four-syllabled word of approbation.

"*Khoroshaya!*" said he. ("Fine!")

"What's fine?"

"The lady," said he, "and tall . . . ."

We came up the Jaffa road toward the hostelry again, and there at a corner is a shop whose windows were pasted out with advertisements of this sort:—

CHUBB'S TOURS.
TRIPS UP THE NILE, IN THE DESERT, TO
JORDAN, THE PYRAMIDS, etc. etc.
WITH CAMELS OR IN TENTS.
EVERY CONVENTION OR NO CONVENTION.
FREE INFORMATION BUREAU.
STEP INSIDE!
FREE LIBRARY FOR TRAVELLERS.
GUIDES, OUTFITS, MONEY, STEAMBOATS.
CARAVANS, PASSPORTS, etc. etc.

Outside of this at the door a Syrian clerk was bowing out a rich nobleman, or one of those "born in the purple of commerce."

"Jaast as you please, sir," said the Syrian; "jaast as you like. Jaast as you please, sir; just as you like."

"What magnificent words!" I thought. "How symbolic!" That man with his money can get any mortal thing. How fortunate he is! Yet I think

Chubb was deceiving him. What he gets from Chubb and his guides won't be exactly what he pleases to have and what he likes. When he goes with his family to the place where the five thousand were fed he will have to hurry back to the hotel for a meal. When he comes to the Jordan he will not see the life-giving stream, but will be rather bored. I should add to Chubb's announcement and his "Every convention or no convention" the little text, "Who drinketh of this water shall thirst again."

. . . . . .

Jerusalem is an extremely ancient-looking city; there is nothing modern about it except its Easter visitors. It has no electric trams, no broad streets, no large shops or offices—even its hotels have a ramshackle appearance. None of the modern cities of great antiquity look their part as Jerusalem does. Its stones are indeed old—though not so old as they look, for in the East they build new houses to look like ruins. A hundred generations have worshipped the living God in the city which is called Jerusalem; its name and foundations have outlived nations and empires.

It has been sacked and destroyed as many times as ancient Rome, and ever, over the debris, some people built it up again. The sceptical aver that no one now knows exactly where the ancient Jerusalem stood—that perhaps it was as much as a mile away, and that localisation and identification of the Holy Places are so much pious fraud. I can offer no

opinion here, and the point is immaterial, for the peasants have no doubt that this is the City of David, street for street and stone for stone.

Jerusalem is built high up—the mountains do not stand round about it. At points it is higher than in the centre; there are the four hills, but they are not so much higher than the rest of the town as the Calton Hill, Edinburgh, is above Princes Street. They give no mountain landscape or mountain freshness.

The sun strikes dead down, pitilessly, so that from twelve till three most Europeans go indoors and sleep, and many shopkeepers put up their shutters. The population, however, is Oriental, and the natives do not mind the heat. Its modern aspect is that of a provincial Mahomedan city. The streets, strange to say, are very shady, for they are narrow, and the houses on each side are high. They are no broader than Great Turnstile, Holborn—long narrow pavements, overcrowded with the out-tumbled wares of the Eastern shops on either side, and full of a flocking, turbaned crowd. Many parts of these roads are arched and roofed, and they descend in long gradual stairways; to enter them is like going underground; the walls and the roofs are grey, lichened, shadowy, and ancient. The most delightful scene there is that of a train of panniered camels stalking up the road through the crowd, or "loping" down.

There are no palm trees in Jerusalem and little

greenery of any kind, but the stony slopes of the hills about it are covered with sparse grass and many wild flowers. There are olive trees, cypresses, and aspens in considerable numbers outside the city walls, on the Mount of Olives, by and in the Garden of Gethsemane, at Bethany, and at Jericho. There are great gardens of orange shrubs heavy laden with oranges at Jaffa, but not at Jerusalem, which stands too high.

At some points of the city it is possible to look far below and away to the wilderness, the little Jordan, and the silvery pool of the Dead Sea. Beyond all these rise the mountains of Egypt—a great wall along the horizon.

. . . . . .

Jerusalem is "the city that we seek"; the difficulty is to find the city when you get to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is different from other sights, like Rome or Athens or the Pyramids. Even the most hardened globe-trotter and sight-seer is to a certain extent a seeker in Jerusalem. He is not quite satisfied when he gets there. There was something beyond what he saw and what he heard—something that he sub-consciously expected to find but did not. Even the man who thoroughly disbelieves in the Bible story has this feeling. Hence, I think, the immense number of guide-books to Jerusalem. Hence the mass of Jerusalem literature. Tourists and pilgrims have turned in vain from book to book, seeking the haunting little secret, the

something which the soul expects to find there. Every building of Jerusalem has been described and surveyed, every inch of the ground has its pages of printed matter, and the baffled reader might well be sick to nausea.

Jerusalem is indeed a "hackneyed" subject. Scarcely any book which tried to give the real Jerusalem could make its way against the existent superfluity of books. It would be simply lost. I am not myself trying to write such a volume. Mine is an attempt to give the story of a pilgrimage, and to make intelligible the religious life of the Russian peasantry. But I cannot assume that all my readers have read these dull guide-books and have been to Jerusalem, nor could I ask them to take so much trouble in order to fill in the background of the picture. I shall be pardoned if I give now and then a few details such as the foregoing, which could no doubt be found in any gazetteer. For the rest, it is one of the children in the school who is showing you round.

A SERVICE IN A CHAPEL OF THE LIFE-GIVING GRAVE.

VI

AT THE CHURCH OF THE LIFE-GIVING GRAVE

When I announced my intention of going to Jerusalem, friends told me I was sure to be disappointed, that every one going there nursed high hopes which were destined to remain unfulfilled; Jerusalem was not at all what we would have it be, what we dream it to be; that the commercial spirit of the Arabs, the fraud and hypocrisy of the Greek monks, and the banality and sordidness of the everyday scenes would be a great shock to me. I should feel that my religion and the Author of it were disgraced, and not in any way honoured or made more holy by what the Sacred Places look in our day. I knew all this too, in myself, and on that account should never have gone to Jerusalem, in the ordinary course of things, from England and in the English way. But now that I have journeyed with the peasants, understood their religious life, and come with them from the other side of Europe, I see all things differently. Jerusalem stands revealed as "the highest of all earthly," the real "Holy of

holies." It might have been that God had sent a blight upon Jerusalem as He did upon Sodom, but He found many pure and simple men worshipping Him there as best they knew how, and the city has remained unharmed. As long as the Russian peasants and their like are gathered together there, God will be found in the midst of them—those who have been disappointed with Jerusalem will simply not have got there at all.

The road from the Jerusalem of the tourist to the Jerusalem of the pilgrim is long indeed. The difference between the man surveying the Church of the Sepulchre with a handbook, and the poor peasant who creeps into the inmost chamber of the Tomb to kiss the stone where he believes the dead body of his Saviour was laid, is something overwhelming to the mind.

For the pilgrimage is the highest rite that Christianity has conceived. As the rite of Communion keeps the memory of Christ "till His coming again," so the pilgrimage foreshadows the whole journey of the human soul in earth and heaven. When the peasant has slept in the sacred Tomb, and awakened again and gone out of it once more, he has been received into the presence of the angels.

But to put aside for a moment this fundamental and personal meaning of the pilgrimage, let me take it simply in its relation to the Holy Orthodox Church and the religious life of the Russian

peasantry. The pilgrimage to Jerusalem is again found to be a fundamental matter, and the Church of the Sepulchre to be the mother shrine of the whole Church. It is an extremely interesting matter, and by no means an idle generalisation. Those who wish to study the religious life of Russia, to understand the reverence for the dead bodies of the saints, and the psychology of the little pilgrimage ought really to take the Jerusalem pilgrimage as a starting-point, for it is in itself an interpretation and explanation.

Western Europeans, and indeed even cultured Russians, divorced from the realities of their native land, must have often wondered at the belief the peasants have that the dead bodies of the saints have in them great holiness, healing power, the strength to work miracles. To take an example—those who have read *The Brothers Karamazov* remember how, when holy Father Zossima was dying, people came from far and near, and brought their sick, maimed, and blind to be in readiness for a miracle directly the good man died. He who in his lifetime had worked no miracles was expected to work them when he was dead. And not even anything so credible as that! It was actually the dead body, the corpse from which the soul had departed, that was supposed to work the miracle. It seems absurd. It is not quite so absurd to the simple Roman Catholic, but utterly absurd to the Protestant. Protestantism reveals itself as

the religion of the mystery of life; Orthodoxy as the religion of the mystery of death.

It is not superstition; it does not spring simply from the peasants' credulity. It is far deeper than that. Superstition is infectious; this other is something spontaneous in the Russian soul. It is perhaps older than Christianity, this worship of corpses, unless we take it that Christianity in one form or another has been existent since the foundation of the world.

The Russian believes—though but one in ten thousand could articulate the belief—that when the soul leaves the body it is purified, that it leaves in the body its earthly impurities. Life is a sort of smelting process, a refining by suffering instead of by fire. The deathbed is the final struggle in the release of the soul. The Russian is very much afraid of sudden death; he is afraid that if he dies quickly the process will not have been properly worked out. He likes to die a prolonged death of suffering on his bed, in order that his soul may be completely purged. To die suddenly is to die like an animal. And yet that dead body in which is left all the earthly dross is treated as having miraculous power. The paradox is only an apparent one. The Russian feels that the corpse has on it the trail of the heavenly spirit which has escaped. As when one looks at an empty chrysalis case one detects traces of the bright scales of the wings of the butterfly that has escaped, so the Russian is aware

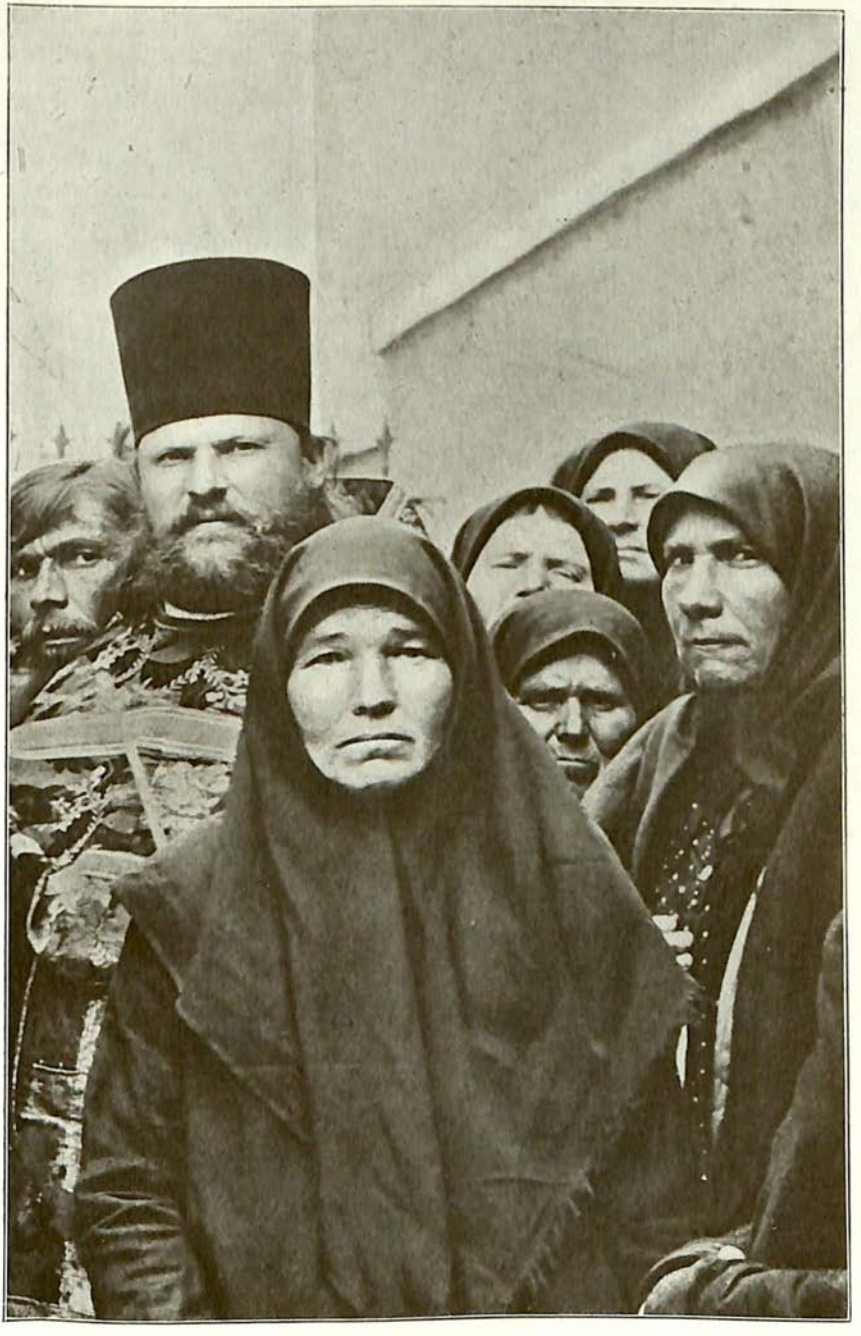
of a sort of astral slime—forgive the expression—on the bodies of those departed this life. The holy man, the great saint, is essentially the man who has greatly suffered, who has refined his soul to perfection. And the body of the holy man is the more holy because a wonderful and celestial spirit has stepped out of it. It is even thought that when exceptional saints die they leave such a trace of their empyreal substance behind that for many years the body remains incorruptible and will not decay.

The body of Jesus, whilst it lay in the Sepulchre, was consequently the greatest of all earthly relics, for out of it had flown not only a perfected celestial spirit, but God of God and Very God of Very God. That relic, however, disappeared. The Bible story is confused: the disciples were evidently of two minds as to the meaning of the Resurrection. Most thought it meant that Christ rose again, as Lazarus rose, in his old earthly body. There was probably a strange rumour for many years after Jesus' death that He was abroad in the land and would shortly manifest Himself. The enemies had said that Jesus' body was stolen away by the disciples by night. All four gospel writers have this slander in mind as a most important point to be refuted. Consequently there is a concerted defence of the material resurrection. The story of Thomas and of the meal that Jesus ate, and many other facts, are given to substantiate the belief that the risen Jesus was not a spirit. Yet Jesus was taken up into heaven, He

vanished into invisibility before the disciples' eyes, and was evidently not subject to the laws of the flesh. Jesus' body certainly vanished, and it was never recovered. Not even an ecclesiastic has ever laid claim to have in his church the remains of Jesus, though such remains would be considered the most holy thing upon the world. Observe, Jesus dead is holier than Jesus alive. For Orthodoxy He *was* dead; for Protestantism He *is* alive for evermore.

There are no bones and dust, there is only the Sepulchre, the place where the shining God stepped out, the place where the glowing, holy Body lay. But that is enough; it is as if the Body lay there still. The stones which the peasants kiss in the sacred Tomb are pregnant with the very mystery of mysteries. The pilgrimage is not so much to the Holy Land or to Jerusalem as to these sacred stones, for they are holier than priest and church and city. The same truth applies to pilgrimage in Russia, the holy bones and dust of the saint deposited at the holiest place in the church, the throne of the altar, are the object of the pilgrimage, not so much the church or monastery itself. The promise to God to go to Jerusalem is called in popular parlance "the promise to the Life-giving Grave."

It was a common salutation of one pilgrim to another in the hostelry of a morning, "Let us go and kiss the grave!" It was in answer to such an invitation that I first visited the Holy Sepulchre. It happened on the morning of the second day; at



FACES AT A PILGRIM'S FUNERAL.

"The pilgrim's whole concern centres round death, just as the whole concern of the Protestant centres round life."

Jerusalem on the succeeding night we were all of us, all who wished, to go and sleep there. It was a strange contrast to come there by day and to come there by night.

We went away down those descending, shadowy, crowded alleys in the broiling noonday, threading our way through a labyrinth—the peasant knew the way—to the strange little turning that delivers you unexpectedly into the sight of the Sepulchre.

"There, that is the Grave," said the peasant, pointing over the crowd of hawkers and buyers who occupied the square in front of the church. I beheld a heavy, ancient building with two disproportionately large doors, one of which was mortared up. We stood in the square facing the doors, and on each side of us, not detached from the church, were the ancient buildings of the monasteries of the Grave in which formerly the pilgrims were accommodated. It was a surprise. The whole was so ruined, so patched and grimed, so ancient, and withal so enigmatical. It seemed as if it might have been produced only the night before by some evil magician. Certainly that round which the Crusader and the Saracen had fought, and round which now the Arab hawkers loafed and screamed, was not beautiful. It had in it an appearance of death.

This is really rather a horror to the fastidious. The noise about it and the offal of the East are appalling. What shall one say of the Turkish gendarme sprawling on a sofa at the entrance

smoking his cigarette and lazily looking at his half-drunk cup of coffee? Even within, there is heard the noise of the incautious movements of Greek and Armenian priests; the church is vast and strange, ruined, dirty beyond words, with verminous walls all cracked and chipped. One has entered into a mysterious and awful chamber. I came, of course, not to look but to pray. I only realise now, as I write, what I saw. A strange thought rose to my mind as we bent down to enter the chamber of the Holy of holies, that Mary, the mother of God, was the first pilgrim to the Life-giving Grave, and up to that moment we were the last.

I followed the pilgrim humbly and prostrated myself at the great stone of anointing that lies in the doorway, and kissed it after him. I followed to various little shrines within the temple and repeated the reverence, and then bent down to enter the tunnel staircase to go to the very cleft in the rock where the sacred Body was laid. The church is built about the crowned and adorned Sepulchre, and the latter, made square on all sides, suggests to the mind the idea of the sacred Ark. I veritably held my breath as I followed the pilgrim. And for me the bond was loose: I do not believe like a peasant. What the poor, simple pilgrim must feel, when at the end of his long journey from the quiet little village in the backwoods, he gets to this point I leave to the imagination. It is a wonder that on that staircase

peasants' hearts do not stop. I should not be surprised to hear that many have died there before now. We crawled forward in entire reverence and touched most delicately with our lips the shrine of shrines. We were in the womb of death. Even the consciousness seemed drawn away and we walked as in a dream. I remember my surprise, when as I lifted my head from kneeling, I suddenly felt a spray of water on my face, a tingling in my eyes, and a breath of perfume. I had not noticed the priest, who sat in the background, holding an aspergeoire in his hand with which he sprayed each worshipper with holy water.

The pilgrim had been many times to the Grave, and he showed me a carved baptism cross which he had taken in with him to the inner sanctuary, and held in that spurt of rose-scented water. When he got back to his native village, greater gift than this cross thus sanctified could not be within his power. It would be something to outlast life and the world itself—a token round the neck of the wearer when dead—the same token round his neck on the final day of resurrection.

For the peasant goes to Jerusalem in order that he may die in a certain sort of way in Russia. His whole concern centres round death just as the whole concern of the Protestant centres round life.

This was our experience of the night in the Tomb. We outlived all the possibilities of death in that night. As I said, it was a strange contrast

to the day-scene. All the scenery of the world seemed changed for our benefit. The square was deserted. The light of day and the feeling of living in the present moment were gone. Myriads of stars looked down and spoke to us of the eternity of the past. We entered the funereal church whose blackness was only intensified by the candles. We were in a crowd like the bodies in a graveyard. We were silent and morose, and said nothing to our neighbours. Each individual settled down to the way in which he wished to pass the night. Some prayed, some prayed aloud, some lay prostrate, some crouched and dreamed, some composed themselves to sleep. Strangely enough we all found the church more verminous than the hostelry. I cannot say what each man lived through. Outside, I know, the stars rolled overhead in that haggard, hungry way that suggests the passing of centuries in a night. I thought of the night after night of stars that look down on the earth where we shall all be buried, the stars that will look down on our dead bodies for ever and ever, and I felt very sad and lonely, like a little child that had a mother but a while since and has just lost her. I dreamed in the dark. Then some sort of comfort came that I cannot analyse, the nameless, and I felt that all the universe had passed away, but we who were lost had all found one another again. Taking a turn to look out at the door, I found it was morning, and I saw a queer little hunchback pilgrim sitting on the cold stone

pavement outside the door of the church. He wore blue spectacles and was poring over an ancient Bible, mumbling as he read, and I caught the phrase I wanted, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, which was and which is, and which is to come."

IV

THE PILGRIMS

I

THE UNCOMMERCIAL PILGRIM

My attention was first drawn to the comic on the pilgrim boat. I was standing by a deaf Turkish hawker in the port of Smyrna, when suddenly a man with a loud hollow voice addressed my neighbour :—

"Move your hearing ear around!"

The Turk obeyed, leaning his head on one side to catch whatever the possible customer might say. The pilgrim put his lips to the Turk's ear and bawled louder than before :—

"I want smoky eye-glasses . . . to keep the sun off . . . Say your lowest price at once as we lose time, and death is coming."

The pedlar fumbled hastily among his wares and produced a pair of spectacles.

"Fifty copecks," he said, apologetically.

"Twenty," said the pilgrim. "Don't waste time. Twenty."

"Forty-five."

"Thirty. That's my last figure. Decide quickly; if you don't accept at once I shall go back to twenty-five and remain at that, after which

I should not agree even if you did come down to thirty."

The poor pedlar could descend no lower, so the pilgrim left him, and toddled away back to his place in the hold, apparently without disappointment. I followed him, and heard him ejaculate to his neighbour down below, "*Vso blago polootchno*," meaning that he had made his journey on to the upper deck, God had preserved him, and he'd come to no harm. Evidently he was one of those who hardly ever moved from his place in the hold. He seemed an extremely original fellow, and I tried to get into conversation with him.

"If I see another pedlar I'll send him to you," I volunteered.

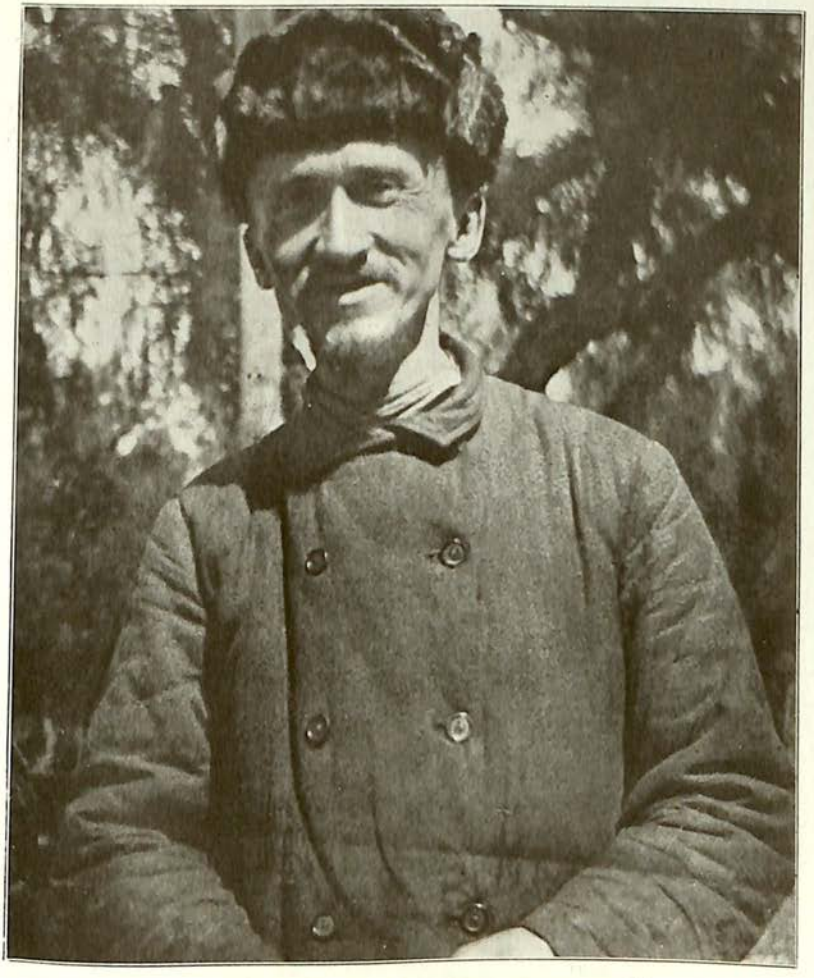
"I need no help," said he, "neither of man nor of woman. Tell me. You have a ring on your finger—does that mean you have been married for the second, third, or fourth time?"

"For the fifth," I replied.

"Hoo, hoo, hoo!" He cast up his eyes to the low roof of the hold and giggled. He lost control of his thin lips and wriggled with amusement. "I quite understand that," he said at last.

But then a change came over his countenance. I asked him from what province he came, and apparently he took it ill.

"Tambof," he said abruptly. "But to return to the matter of your wives. You said five; I laughed. Perhaps I had no right to laugh. I don't know



LIUBOMUDROF, THE COMIC.

you; you are only an acquaintance. I should probably never get to know you so well that I could be sure of you. The proverb says that to know any one as you know yourself it is necessary to eat forty pounds of salt, and that in the end of ends is impossible. To be brief, the more we probe into the human nature of our fellow-man the more bitterness we find. To know a man is like committing suicide by swallowing salt a spoonful at a time till we have eaten forty pounds. Then we know him and we are dead. Where have you sprung from? I take you for a man. You may be a woman for all I know . . . . in man's clothes. Avaunt!"

I tried to be cheerful, but only got sent away. So, feeling rather offended, I went back to my place upstairs again, and we didn't see one another till we arrived at the hostelry.

There I saw him again, and saw him every day, for he slept not twenty feet away from me. One morning he came up to me with a deliberative air and himself broke the silence. He didn't refer to our previous conversation, and indeed was very abrupt.

"Can you tell me," said he, "whether the Dreadful Judgment will take place in the Valley of Jehoshaphat or on the shores of the Dead Sea? Some people say one thing; some another."

This question was our re-introduction. He was a strange little peasant with a large, idiotic-looking

head, and wasted arms and legs. He wore a peasant-made wadded jacket and jack-boots into which his little trousers were tucked. I could not answer his question about the Dreadful Judgment, but we went together to the Dead Sea shore from Jordan, and he came to the conclusion it would be there. We never referred to our first meeting on the boat, and perhaps he had forgotten it. Anyway, we remained on quite intimate terms to the day of my departure for Russia. Several days he lay ill on his pallet and could not stir, and I sat beside him, read extracts out of holy books, and talked. He was not an ordinary pilgrim at all, but then I think that each and every one of these seven thousand pilgrims, known intimately, would reveal himself as by no means ordinary. But that is by the way. Certainly this one was abnormal. He spoke in enigmatical sentences and often at great length, and in a very complex style. His voice was so arresting that it could be distinguished from afar, even in the buzz of the whole hostelry speaking at once. He made a confession to me.

"I was once an *alcoholik*. My two great sins were drunkenness and adultery, a leaning to the one as to the other; a weakness for strong drinks and for the female sex. For although God made man and woman equal and complementary, taking the one out of the other, and making one want the other, and bidding the other cleave to the one, yet man is not content; for he imagines that happiness is in change,

even though he has the stars over him as an example of constancy in the very night of his falseness. And although spirits are a superfluity, God having given men nerves in certain quantities and proportions fitting to his virtues, and the strong liquor upsetting those proportions and changing those quantities, yet man thinks in his smallness that more happiness is to be obtained by being in the wrong quantities, out of their balance, not sober, drunken, inebriate . . . you understand. Yes, these were my sins for which I suffered in God's mercy. One day I was struck down from heaven. I felt a terrible pain down the middle of my forehead. . . ."

The pilgrim stopped, and crossed himself three times with awful solemnity.

"Since the morning when that happened," he went on, "I have not lifted a spade or held a rein. I fell ill. My enemies appeared. I became ill and my enemies appeared; the well became ill, the friend became the enemy. They made a plan to steal my property."

The peasant looked me straight in the eyes. I looked at his yellow, wrinkled face, and saw that he was about to trust me with his most dangerous confidence.

"I was eight months in a lunatic asylum," he went on hastily. "My enemies contrived it. They sat in my house whilst I was ill and contrived it. So I lay in a madhouse till I saw a priest and asked him to speak to the doctor. I paid a little money, I

may say, a little of the paper with which we ease our business, he, he, he! . . . and I managed it. The doctor certified my recovery. I got the plan in a dream. I felt well, and I resolved never to smell a glass of vodka any more, and I haven't. I know I should have that pain again if I did. I gained much of my property back then, but finding myself useless for work, and having money on my hands and time, and reflecting on the mercy of God, I vowed to go to Jerusalem, and I put a notice on my house door to that effect, and collected many holy commissions."

This evidently reminded him of some duties, for he said to me, "If you are free we can go out into the city together." I agreed to accompany him, and we went out to look at the shops and buy ikons.

We turned down past the cathedral and the hospital, and into the town. On the way I stopped at a shop to buy some photographic material. The salesman, not understanding the Russian word for films (*plonki*), I had to explain what I wanted in French. When I got outside again the pilgrim asked me what language I had spoken in.

"In French," I replied.

"They speak it in your province?" he queried.

"Yes. We learn it besides our own language; it's often necessary," I replied.

We went on along a line of ecclesiastical shops where religious ornaments, crucifixes, charms, and curios were exposed for sale. My friend evidently wanted to buy, but he seemed to hesitate. We

stopped a long time looking at the shop windows, and I judged he was very glad to have me by him, for he would not allow me to desert him.

At length he seemed to have made his choice of a shop. "You are my witness," he said, as we stood on the threshold.

"Witness of what?" I asked.

"Of what I buy," he replied.

He bought, first of all, a stout pilgrim's staff, brass-headed, not for himself apparently, for it was disproportionately large. He was particularly careful to inspect it, and see that it had printed on the side of it, "With the blessing of the Holy City of Jerusalem."

The shopman began to pester him to buy frankincense. He was an oily-lipped, fat-nosed, dark salesman, a Jew I thought, but he said he was Orthodox; said also that he had been educated for the Church at Moscow, though he spoke Russian deplorably. "An unpleasant, fawning, loquacious shopman," I thought.

The pilgrim asked to see a *panorama*, as he called it, that is, a stereoscope with a set of Jerusalem pictures. As in this shop the pictures were not photographic, but cheap lithographs, the pilgrim was very disappointed. He looked at about fifty pictures and decided fifty times. "It wasn't good enough." The shopman was mortified. He was quite a young Jew, had an extreme contempt for pilgrims in general, no sympathy with them or

understanding of them. So when the peasant refused to take the stereoscope he began reducing the price. He came down from three roubles fifty copecks to one rouble fifty, and quite unnecessarily showed of how much he would have robbed us. My companion, however, ignored the salesman's personality and character. These obviously didn't concern him. He asked for myrrh, and without any bargaining bought three pounds of it. He got it at a reasonable price, for the shopman was sobered.

"These are ordinary purchases," said Liubomudrof, for that was my pilgrim's name—lover of wisdom, it means. "These are ordinary purchases, as one man to another, God being above us and this being my witness," he pointed to me. "Now, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen."

He turned north, south, east, and west in turn and crossed himself, the salesman with affable familiarity and feigned reverence doing the same. I stood and watched, or examined the things for sale.

"Now," said Liubomudrof, looking straight at the expectant shop-keeper, "I want ten thorn crowns."

"What do you want?"

The pilgrim explained. He wanted thorn crowns such as the Arab peasant women plait and sell in the streets, crowns made of the same thorns as those which wounded Jesus' brow. The salesman

sent a boy out for the ten, and brought them in a few minutes while we examined ikons. These also were bought without bargaining.

"Now," said the pilgrim, "I want a wooden baptism cross with a figure of Christ on one side, and on the other bits of the seven sacred woods inlaid."

"Forty copecks," said the salesman. Such goods are sold at five copecks.

"Ah!" said Liubomudrof. "I do not bargain over sacred things, and I'm not proposing a reduction. However, I have an order. I don't want one only, no doubt that makes a difference with you. Now, if I were to say I wanted ten I suppose that would be different."

"Oh yes, that would be quite different."

"Well, then, now that I've told you I shan't bargain with you, and you quite understand, tell me at what rate you would charge for them now that I bring an order to you."

"I'll tell you what I'll do, *batushka*," said the shopman. "So as there shall be no bargaining, I'll say a minimum price. I'll say thirty copecks each, and I'll give you a special large cross in for yourself as a premium."

"Hoo, hoo," said the pilgrim, "that's cheating. I did not ask for a premium as you call it, and I don't want it. How much is such a premium worth anyway?"

"We sell them for seventy copecks at least."

"Well, then, distribute that seventy copecks; spread it over the other crosses and make their price less. I want twenty-eight, that is at least two copecks less."

"I'm quite honest," said the shopman. He crossed himself with an appearance of devoutness. "And now, *batushka*, I'll tell you what I'll do. Seeing that you want twenty-eight, and will probably bring other orders to me, I'll make it twenty-five copecks each, and I'll still give you the large cross in."

"No, no," said Liubomudrof impatiently. "The price is thirty copecks, but I want no premium, and I propose that you deduct two copecks each in respect of it, and make the price twenty-eight. Do you agree?"

The salesman with a serious and appreciative look agreed, but he said he would give the cross in all the same. This puzzled Liubomudrof, and after repeating that he didn't want the cross he seemed about to leave the shop.

The shopman hastily put it away and took the order, sorting out the crosses. Liubomudrof rejected seven as being bad specimens, lacking the inlay of the seven woods. When the twenty-eight had been found, the shopman offered the pilgrim chains by which to attach the crosses—they were the sort which are hung round the neck.

Liubomudrof rejected them. "String is better," said he.

The shopman, however, put in two as a bounty, and even offered me one free. He was excited at the money he was taking.

Liubomudrof then bought five funeral shrouds and five black skull-caps embroidered with silver-coloured crosses. He also bought a sheaf of hideous oleographs, and twenty little manufactured and stamped tablets of Jerusalem earth, and he ordered an ikon of St. Ignatief to be specially painted for him, indicating exactly how it was to be done—all without bargaining. Then he requested the man to make out a bill and receipt it, and said he would pay. He waved a twenty-five rouble note. The shopman, to my surprise, was very much disinclined to write out a bill. He was afraid that Liubomudrof might show his bill to the authorities, and that how much he had overcharged would be noticed by them. The pilgrim, however, was firm, and was ready to go out of the shop quite happily and cheerfully, resigning all his purchases if he could not have a receipt. The salesman therefore, though very unwillingly, wrote out the list, the number, and the price. Liubomudrof corrected him several times on unimportant points. At the end he signed his name simply "Dmitri." I said it was not enough; that a surname was needed, and the name of the shop, but Liubomudrof said, "No, Dmitri is sufficient." Again there was trouble over the change, for among the Russian gold was a ten-franc piece which was supposed to be the same as

five roubles. The pilgrim refused the coin; didn't know what it was, but refused it as bad. "It hadn't got the Tsar's head on," he said. Affecting to examine the coin in his fingers, the shopman dropped it, and fooling us to the top of his bent, he lisped out, "Ah! God have mercy!" There lay the yellow coin of the Republique Française of 1875, and before he picked it up he made the sign of the cross over it.

At last, with right change, with a bill of a kind, and loaded with purchases, we left the shop. Liubomudrof chuckled.

"*Vso blagopolòotchno*," he said, using the same phrase as when he got safely back to his seat in the hold on the pilgrim boat.

Some days later he brought me a long document to sign.

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that on the 12th March 1912, Pavel Pavlovitch Liubomudrof, a pilgrim at Jerusalem, bought in the Holy City of Jerusalem, at Dmitri's shop, near the church of the Life-giving Grave . . . . etc.

He enumerated with many explanations the things that he had bought and the price paid for them. At the end it was signed, "Pavel Pavlovitch Liubomudrof," and under that signature came another five lines to this effect:—

I certify that I was with Pavel Pavlovitch Liubomudrof on the 12th March, and witnessed all these transactions, and I certify that the things were bought as written above.

Then I understood how it was he had said I was his witness, and I signed.

The Comic was very fond of making out long, official-looking documents, and he spent nearly the whole of one day composing and copying out a long petition to the Governor of Tambof, apparently about his property. He had his mysteries.

One day he came to me and said, "I want your help. Write me a telegram in French. Translate this for me and take it to the Turkish post-office."

"Why in French?" I asked.

"They won't take a telegram in Russian," he replied.

"But to whom are you sending it?" I enquired.

"A friend in Russia," he replied; "that is irrelevant."

"But will he understand French?" I asked.

This was a poser. It seemed very certain that the pilgrim's friend was simply an uneducated mouzhik. The upshot was that we went to the post-office, and we found that the Russian telegram could be sent, but it would have to be trans-literated, that is, written in Latin letters. So the telegram was sent, "Pay Kislovsky 100 roubles.—Liubomudrof." I wonder if it was understood at that rural post-office to which it was directed.

Yes, we did a great many such things together, and the pilgrim came to regard me as an indispensable person. He came along at all times and at all

hours, and asked me the most astonishing questions —to the great distaste of Philip who liked privacy. Then Liubomudrof and I went to Jordan. We spent together the morning of the receiving of the Sacred Fire. But of these matters I must speak in due place.

A CROWD JUST OUT OF CHURCH.

The little ones are Syrian children from the Russian Mission School.

II

PHILIP

BEFORE relating the story of the caravan to Jordan, I must just say a word about a pilgrim who was the very opposite of Liubomudrof in his dealings with the shop-keepers, namely, my enigmatical acquaintance Philip. Philip was a commercial person at Jerusalem; praying took but a third or perhaps a fourth place in his life there.

He was a Little Russian from the province of Podolsk, a large settlement near the Austrian frontier. I know I was rather inclined to set it down to the influence of Austria that he was such a peculiar peasant. I hit on the wrong person when I went to live with him at the hostelry. If any one wished to write a book on all that was wrong at Jerusalem, Philip would have been the type to study. He was a tall, full-blooded peasant, broad-shouldered but fat, with a large, dirty, black-haired, unshaven face, fat nose and cheeks, round chin, dreamy, affectionate, but cunning eyes; his hair brushed back over a clever, roofed head, showed a high but red and wrinkled Russian fore-

head. His bushy moustache hung in a sensual sort of drop over thick, red, sluggish lips. He was thirty-five. He walked with a peculiar jaunt, lifting his back up and down as he went, wore a sugar-loaf sheepskin hat, and talked in a low, musical whisper. He liked to descend into an artificial, childish sing-song when he was talking familiarly; he knew every one, and whenever any trouble arose about places or the like in the hostelry, he always settled it in a way that led the other peasants to think he had authority to do so.

I did not personally feel drawn to him. He was much more dirty than he seemed; his curtained apartment was suffocating; I feared he was in league with the pickpocket monk. Eventually I discovered so many of his ways, and he had so much reason to fear and hate me, that I left him for a safer place in the hostelry. Philip was a pander to the monks, a tout for ecclesiastical shop-keepers like Dmitri's, an agent for bringing credulous pilgrims to priests who said prayers to God on payment of money, a smuggler of goods to Russia, a trader in articles of religion and Turkish goods, an immoralist. He infringed all the rules of the Palestine Society, had an understanding with all the lower officials, paid nothing for his keep, did not give his passport in, could even get his dinner free. He was pious with a genuine childlike piety, made a journey to Jordan to get ten bottles of the real Jordan water, and would not think of filling his

bottles at Jerusalem and lying when he got home; but he was all on the side of disorganisation and corruption, and the presence of such in the fold is a menace to the sheep and to the good work and name of the shepherds—the Orthodox Palestine Society.

He was in Jerusalem to make money, and he carried back to Russia each year something like four hundred pounds of luggage, though he came with only a sack on his back. And he bestowed all that immense quantity of stuff on the ship, and took it through the Customs at Odessa without paying a farthing for freight or duty. He had had much experience, and knew his way about, both in Russia and Jerusalem.

I must say his ways puzzled me. All one day he cut up potatoes, pared them, sliced them, and hung them on strings to dry. The next day he did the same, morning, noon, and night, and he seemed to have patience to go on for eternity. Our apartment was hung with strings of black slices and presented an extraordinary appearance. Moreover, no one else in the whole hostelry was doing such a thing or had such strings drying. The other pilgrims were very curious; but to all questions Philip answered that Turkish potatoes dried were good in soup—which was untrue. Whoever heard of any one putting ancient black slices of bitter potatoes in soup? His explanation to me was more amazing than the act. "Don't tell the others: the potatoes

are for the peasant women in our village; they break the slices up and put them in their tea; it's good for toothache, headache, stomachache. The Arabs use it. Once I took a pound home, and they were liked so much that now whenever I go to Jerusalem all the *babas* come round me asking me to bring some home."

Another day Philip brought in seventy-five yards of muslin, and spent hours and hours cutting it into squares, and not deigning an explanation, till one day he took them out in the morning to a "Jew Factory," where he had them all stamped "With a blessing from Jerusalem."

"What will you do with them?" I asked.

"Give them to the peasant girls at the fair," he replied, "for a copeck or so."

"But how can a Jew give the muslin a blessing from Jerusalem by stamping with a machine?"

"I shall lay them on the grave," he replied.

We went out one morning, and after long haggling at a shop—not Dmitri's—bought sixty-six pounds of frankincense, which he carried home on his back in a great dun-coloured sack.

But instead of going into all these commercial iniquities, I will tell of a little outing he and I had just before going to the Jordan. After all I shall have to tell more of Philip's ways when I tell of life in the hostelry as it was when all the new pilgrims came and the old ones returned from Nazareth—when we had a full house.

Philip said, "Let us go out to pray," and we went to the Church of Christ's torments, a Greek temple where the service was not in Russian, and neither he nor I knew much of the meaning. There was a great crowd of well-dressed Greeks, and we stood at the back prostrating ourselves on the cold stone, actually outside the church door. Directly the service was ended we took candles and went down to do reverence in the dungeons. Being at the back of the congregation we were in a fortunate position, for many worshippers wished to do as we did, and it was well to be the first to go down the dark stairways.

"They bought it recently from the Turks," said Philip. "They dug it up and found a lot of human bones—see!"

He pointed to little piles of bleached human bones that the monks had arranged edifyingly. Philip was quite serious. Though his purposes at Jerusalem were commercial he had no doubts of his religion. We went into the den where Christ was scourged, and kissed the stones and the ikon of Christ set up there. We also kissed the stone stocks in which Jesus is supposed to have been set. We prostrated ourselves in the room where Jesus was kept waiting whilst Pilate harangued the people and offered them Barabbas; we even saw the basin in which Pilate washed his hands. I forget some of the little shrines in these dungeons. There was the place where the great ikon of Jesus crowned with

thorns is kept, the den in which St. Peter lay when he was delivered by the angel. We hurried along from one to the other, lighting up the dark corners with our flickering tapers. As we went out we heard the hoarse voices of guides showing these curiosities to European visitors.

We drank tea and wine with bread and raisins with a hospitable priest at the back of the building, and he persuaded me to write down the names and addresses of three virtuous people in Russia. "Write down all, all you know," he urged. But I averred that that was all I could tell him. "All right, *batushku*," said he, "now I shall make you a present." And he gave me a little oleograph picture of Christ sitting in the stocks. It was part of Philip's business to bring pilgrims to this priest: the latter was circularising people in Russia for subscriptions for the building of his church.

Philip took me away to visit an acquaintance of his, a little Russian monk from his own district, Father Constantine, a miserable, melancholy hermit who lived in a cell near Herod's wall. Evidently Father Constantine had wanted to see Philip for some time, for he talked to him very anxiously and paid no attention to me. Indeed, he came to us before we got to his door and hurriedly brought us in. It was a room no bigger than a large cupboard, and it lay in unimaginable dirt and disorder. The table was a three-legged stool; we sat about it on provision boxes. On the table was a large bottle of

church wine and two glasses. The fat little monk, who was dressed in greasy, ancient clothes, leaned across to Philip, put a little fat hand on his shoulder, and whispered to him with artificial sobs.

"Go there, go there this afternoon, I'll give you a letter for her, she is in a bad state. Give her the five roubles, that is, wait of course till she asks for money. But if she asks, give it her. It is a lot of money, and I wouldn't give it if she didn't expect it or didn't ask for it. See, I have a letter for you, I wrote it yesterday. How dusty it is! We need a clean out in here; the dust is always falling, even on the wine just poured out. But come, you'll have something to drink."

He poured us out wine in the two glasses, enquired who I was, what government, etc. etc. I didn't feel like wine, but I allowed him to pour me out a glass.

"Hungry?" said the monk. "No doubt! All I have is *arabsky kushanie* (Arab-eating); never mind, it's what God sends, it's not bad."

He placed on the stool table a plate of half-eaten pickled cauliflower of very sickly taste, for it was soaked in Lenten oil, a basin of black compôte made from cheap Turkish unwashed fruits, and a dish of cold cooked grain.

"Eat what God has sent," said he, and he resumed his conversation with Philip.

"Father Antony is dead," said he.

"No!" said Philip, "I had not heard."

"Yes, he finished up stark staring mad. For the last six weeks he's been drinking every hour. Nobody ever found him sober. We daren't go near him; he threatened to murder us. When we looked through the window of his cell he shook a razor at us. I only went once, and he abused me who used to be his friend, his bosom companion. So I said as I went away, 'Next time I come it'll be to sew you up.' So it was . . . they came to me the day before yesterday and said, 'Father Constantine, will you sew him up?'"

"Ai, ai, ai!" said Philip in a melancholy sing-song voice, wagging his head.

"Yes, they were afraid, they didn't like to, and so they came to me. It's the eighteenth man I've sewn up here. It was a sad piece of work washing the corpse and sewing up the shroud, but I'm an experienced hand."

Objurgated at this point I resigned my wine and handed it over to the monk, who drank down the contents and poured me out a second. We had only two glasses between the three. The food was beyond me, but I helped myself, and pretended to eat just to keep them company. They took me for a mouzhik and paid me no attention. They went on talking; I took stock of the room. There was truly an unconscionable amount of dust and litter, and even the prints on the walls were effaced by dirt, age, and fly-marks. The only substantial piece of furniture was a cupboard full of wine bottles.

There was no bed: the old fellow apparently slept in an old blanket on the floor. On one of the cobwebby walls was a notice which reminded me of the evils of degenerate ecclesiasticism. It was a tariff for prayers:—

For eternal memory in the Monastery, every day for ever	30	roubles
For eternal memory once a week . . .	10	„
For eternal memory once a year . . .	5	„
For a lamp to be lit that shall never be put out	100	„

And I thought, "This won't do at all. To write down a thing like this is obviously simony; even taking money when there is no definite undertaking is a delicate matter, but this is depravity." Yet before I left Jerusalem I saw such a notice in print, and I know it has been circulated broadcast.

Poor old Father Constantine, however, continued his talk: "Father Joseph will be next, he hasn't been sober for a month, he doesn't know what he's doing, he'll pick up the kerosine, drink that, and there'll be an end of him. You remember how Father George died after drinking methylated spirit. O Lord my God, what a shock! Yes, every time I hear a knock in the night I think, Here it is, a messenger to say, 'Come and sew up Father Joseph, come and wash his corpse, nobody else dares.' People begin to look on me simply in that light. But who will sew me up when my turn comes? I also am a sinner. I'm not so sober as I was."

Philip and he were at their fifth glass at this point.

I had resigned my glass long since, for it was a heavy, oppressive wine.

The monk showed a tendency to sob. Suddenly something seemed to happen to him. He was looking up at the ikon as if it were far, far away—star-gazing at it, in fact. "Philip," he said, "I pray each day for forgiveness to the blessed Mother of God, and it seems I see her move towards me." At this point he ceased speaking, and stared into vacancy as if he saw something we did not. His eyes caught a vinous, but beatific expression, floods of tears rolled down his red cheeks, and he held up his little fat fingers as if to take some gift of mercy to his bosom.

I must say I was astonished, for the old fellow was certainly not acting a part. I feared he had gone mad. But the mood passed as suddenly as it had come. The tears dried. He turned his attention to me.

"You've no doubt got some one to pray for," said he, "some in your village for health of body or peace of soul. Why go to Bethlehem, or Nazareth, or Jordan. They take your money there and forget all about you! Philip knows. He cares for the poor pilgrim, has been here ten times at least, and knows all the frauds. Just shell out all the papers you've got and the subscriptions, and I'll see that everything's carried out properly."

I was nonplussed. "I haven't any," I said. "You can pray for my mother and father if you like."

"God rest their souls! Give me their Christian names."

"Oh, they are alive," said I, "but perhaps you had better pray for me. I am a great sinner; here's fifty copecks. And many thanks to you."

We rose to go out. The monk gave Philip the letter. "Be sure and go to the nunnery," said he; "find out about her. Don't give her the money unless she asks for it. Five roubles is much, very much . . . Don't forget . . . and come back again as soon as you can."

We parted.

"What was the matter with him?" I asked Philip when we got out of earshot. "Why did he stare into the air that time and call on the Virgin?"

"He had a vision of his sins," said Philip, in a matter-of-fact air. "He often has them."

My companion seemed drowsy and sulky; he had had quite enough wine, more than enough, in fact.

"I've little time left before Easter," said he, "and a great deal to do. I can't spare time to go on that old monk's business. . . . Now I must buy something, so as not to go back to the hostelry empty handed."

We went into a shop and bought three hundred crosses. Philip hitched the great sack containing them on to his shoulders, and bore them as a man does a sack of coals all the way to the Russian settlement, and to our corner where was the

curtained apartment. Then, despite the fact that time was precious, he lay down on his sheepskin and slept till late in the evening. Father Constantine's church wine was potent, especially in conjunction with bad cauliflower, oil, and compote.

III

THE MONK YEVGENY

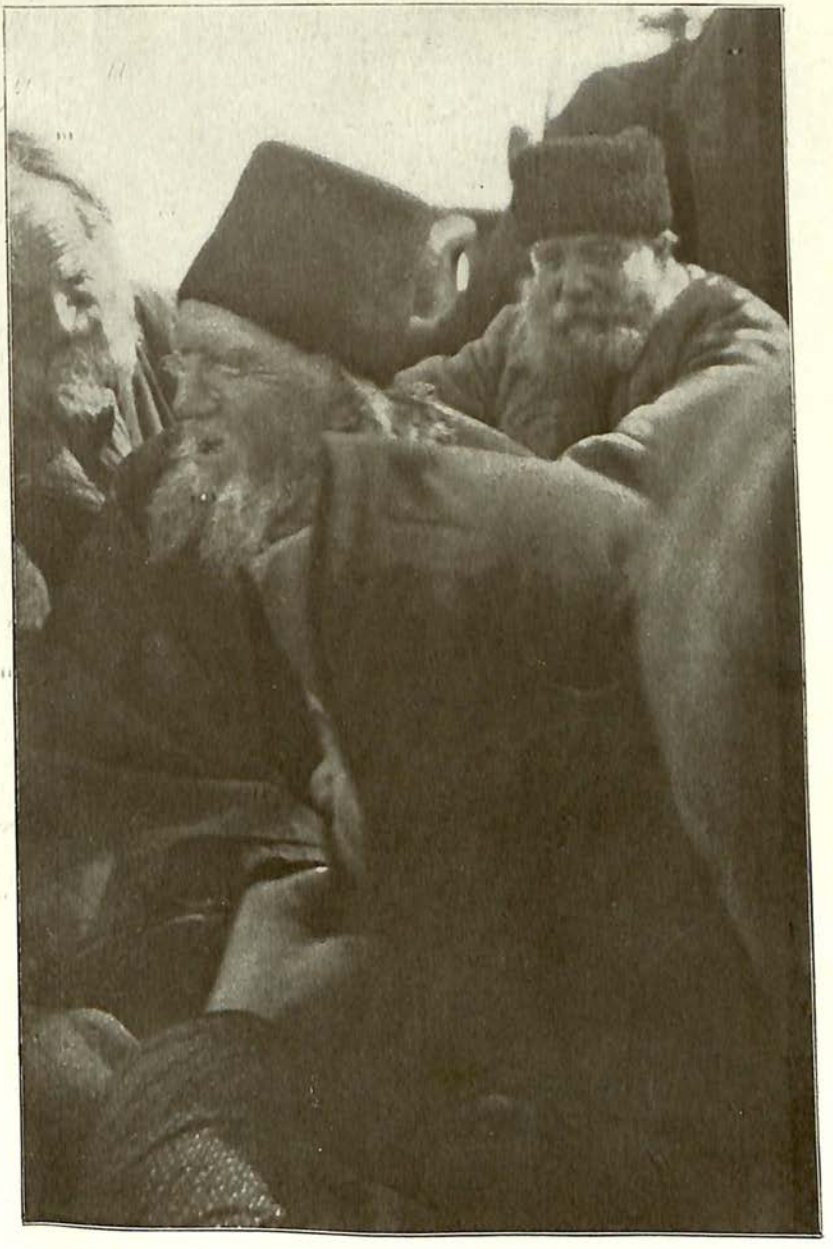
FATHER CONSTANTINE was a type of degenerate Jerusalem monk. A peasant who had had a wish to live worthily, he had, no doubt, offered his soul to God as many young men do in Russia, had renounced the world and entered a Russian monastery. Philip told me he had been a monk in a monastery at Kiev, had been transferred to the Ilinsky shrine at Odessa, and thence to Jerusalem. It would have been interesting to follow the history of his decay. It certainly was a strange ending for a simple life—drunkenness, religious hysteria, and corpse washing.

I met another monk of an extremely different type, Yevgeny, also an old man, sixty-five in fact, and given to drink, but one who was living his life, and being young even in old age. It was he who raised the scandal over the Syrian girls, he who preached what I called the "Gospel of Stupidity" on the pilgrim boat. He was a type that counts for far more than Father Constantine in Russia and the world, for wherever he went he threw himself

and his prejudices, right or wrong, headlong into men's affairs.

We early came to know one another. The good old man had warned the pilgrims to beware of the English, and amusingly talked with one and knew him not. I pleased him by asking intelligent questions, and somehow or other we spent much time together at Jerusalem, though we must have seemed an ill-assorted couple.

Outside the hostelry were gardens planted with pepper trees covered with pepper-corns; there were also many cedars, aspens, and olives, and under the trees were grass swards, flower beds, and gravel paths. It was a pleasant place to perambulate; the monks came out to meditate and read the Scriptures there, and the peasants, all flushed with sunburn, sat in the shade of the trees resting their weary limbs. I commonly turned up in this pleasant place sometime in the morning, read a chapter of the Bible, and jotted down in my note-book any particular points in the pilgrimage that occurred to me at that time as vital. Sometimes I would sit an hour or so uninterrupted, but generally not more than twenty minutes. For Yevgeny would come along and talk or ask me to walk with him. He was a jealous sort of character, and if I had begun a talk with some peasant he would be sure to come and bear me off, saying he would have liked to stay with them, but as he was an old man his legs grew cold when he sat in the shade.



FATHER YEVGENY DISCOURSING ON THE BOAT.

He was a tall man and spare, but not thin. He had good ample shoulders under his cassock, and stout arms and legs. His face was ancient, and framed in grey hair; his eyes sunken, yet live and intellectual; his cheeks shrivelled and red, with shadowy furrows. His gums lacked teeth, but he opened his mouth wide when speaking, and his ill-pronounced words seemed to gain authority from his toothlessness. He always stood erect, having a sort of military tradition in his bearing, for he had been a soldier. His movements were uncompromising, dramatic, and at times awe-inspiring. Though no one knew anything much about him, and he had no actual authority, he was always a central figure wherever he went. He commanded, instructed, rated, cursed, blessed, and never lost any dignity in coming out of a dilemma.

One day we were in the back room of one of the little pilgrim-restaurants near the hostelry, and had each ordered a penny plateful of boiled beans, when Yevgeny jumped up and addressed the occupants of the table next to ours; they were swarthy, wild-looking Bulgarians with long black hair and dense whiskers, and they wore broad-brimmed black felt hats cocked jauntily over their ears.

"Am I in the presence of beasts?" asked Yevgeny. "Am I in the presence of beasts or of men? Take off your hats! How do you dare to come in here like Turks with your hats on as if there were no ikons. I have taken off my own hat,

which is a holy hat and need not be removed, and my friend here, a simple Russian, has taken off his. Who are you to keep your hats on?"

Yevgeny stood pointing to the ikon figure. Three of the Bulgarians took off their hats, but the fourth paid no attention whatever. He was busy pouring out wine for his companions.

"What is it the *batushka* is saying?" I heard them say. "It's our hats, I suppose. What's he worrying about? Isn't it our concern?"

The recalcitrant one, a fat, jovial man, still kept his hat on. Yevgeny called for the owner of the shop, a Syrian Christian of commercial soul.

"You come in here to have your beans," said the Syrian; "you mustn't interfere with other customers."

"Are you a Christian?" thundered Yevgeny. "Then command him to take off his hat else I leave you."

The fat Bulgarian went on pouring out wine and babbling in his native tongue.

"Come on," said Yevgeny, "we will go. No, thanks, we don't want your beans. Sell them to the Turks, Judas! Come on, come on."

He stalked out of the shop. I remained and ate my meal. But presently he returned into the shop storming all the way, and creating such a clamour that the customers were frightened and the owner was certainly vexed.

"Oh," said he, "if he doesn't take off his hat, or

if he isn't turned out I will pronounce a curse over the shop. I will curse it. I have the power."

"I wondered what was going to happen. Would there be a great scene? Would there, perhaps, be a fight? . . . the Bulgarians looked very warlike. But no; I was far out in my imaginings; the miracle of miracles took place. The swarthy peasant, the offender, himself a pilgrim, took off his hat and came up to the monk, and said in a gentle, simple voice—

"Forgive me, father; I didn't know you were referring to me. My back was to you, and I didn't know you were a father; forgive me now and give me your blessing."

"You sincerely repent?" said Yevgeny.

"I didn't know. Forgive me. Give me your blessing."

"If you repent I forgive you," said the monk, somewhat astonished, and he made the sign of the cross over the kneeling peasant, very solemnly pronouncing a blessing the while.

"And now I shall kiss you," said the Bulgarian, and with great gusto and simple happiness he kissed the old red, wizened, hairy cheeks of the monk and his aged lips. We all looked on, and it was as if a ray of morning sunshine had leapt down us upon after rainy weather. Every one in the whole establishment felt astonishingly happy.

"It was a victory," said the monk afterwards when we got into the street.

Another day we went down to see the Mosque of Omar, which is built as they say over the ruins of Solomon's Temple, and Yevgeny had partaken plentifully of the juice of the vine. "I need the wine to keep me warm," he used to say apologetically, "my limbs go very cold now every day because I'm getting old, and my time is drawing near!" We had gone on our own account, that is, without any letter to the Turks to let us in, and of course had been turned back, for the Mosque is accounted very sacred, and is kept very jealously guarded from the chance footsteps of the unbeliever. Yevgeny, with the passion of cross *versus* crescent in his bosom, was very angry, and tried to force his way through, but was stopped by the Turkish soldiers. We retraced our footsteps through an animated and somewhat hostile crowd of Arabs. And all the way back Yevgeny cursed them, shouted Anathema, and made fork lightning with his two fingers and thumb put together and dashed through the air in mystic signs. I should explain that the two fingers and thumb together symbolise the Trinity. We were surrounded by a crowd of Easterns, coffee faced, with gleaming teeth, beturbaned. I thought there was going to be trouble, when suddenly a reasonable old fellow, whom I took to be a Persian, spoke for the Mahomedans. "Why are you angry, old man? You wouldn't allow us into your Sepulchre. Why should we allow you in our Mosque?" Yevgeny, who was a thorough

fire-eater, had really great dramatic force in him. He never ceased to walk forward with me even when he was addressed, and he never ceased fork lightning with his fingers; but when it looked as if we should be driven by a mob he suddenly stopped, faced his foes, and dramatically put aside his black cassock, showing underneath a great red cross embroidered on a black shirt. Every one stood back, and the superstitious Moslems half expected a miracle. "And now," said Yevgeny, "begone, accursed!" With that the crowd dispersed, and as we went forward once more it was only a few curious who were watching us.

"A victory," said the monk to me. "It is always necessary to fight with force. Once I had energy; now I am weaker. You know what I believe, weak speaking sets people against you; never speak at all unless you are going to conquer."

"Do all monks wear that cross?" I asked, "I never guessed it was there under the cassock."

"No," said he, "only a few of us are permitted to wear it. It is a special honour and privilege."

It needs perhaps a third incident to show Father Yevgeny in action. One afternoon he asked me to come with him to see a Bulgarian monk at the monastery of the Sepulchre, and we went along the familiar alley to the strange square where the Church of the Grave looks out, and we entered one of the doors at the side and went up a stone stairway to the brother's cell. Here it turned out that it

was not the Bulgarian monk that we had come to visit, but his sister, a pious woman who had heard of Yevgeny's celebrity and wanted his advice. She was very good-looking, about five-and-twenty, of full figure, large pale face, and extraordinarily abundant black hair. Directly Yevgeny saw her he took fright visibly, for women he regarded as "the devil," and neither more nor less.

There were four or five quiet people in the room, but the beautiful lady was the hostess, and everything centred in her. She made us Turkish coffee in thimbleful cups, and gave us little squares of Turkish delight in which were little nut kernels.

Yevgeny tried to talk to the brother and leave me to the lady, but the latter brought her chair over and sat opposite him.

"Do you know, father," said she, "it is not with us as it is with you in Russia. We are all very wild. Many of us are going astray. I don't know whether it is due to the Turks or to the factories. We work all we can, but we cannot stem the tide. It seems to me it needs that some one should make a great sacrifice again. The people need an example in contemporary life. I have thought that perhaps I might give up everything, all my goods and all my life, and in such a way that our Bulgarians should know and understand. It seems it would be a good work. What do you say? I have heard much of your wisdom, and I asked my

brother to bring you. Forgive me, but you see it is not an idle matter."

Yevgeny answered her in the most astonishing fashion. I think he was afraid of her in his peculiar way. He recited in a loud voice that passage in the Bible which tells of how a woman in the crowd touched Jesus, who in His turn perceived that virtue had gone out of Him.

The lady looked at him with an un-understanding gaze. "I should like, without any vanity, to become a saint for the people's sake," she said. "What must I do?"

Yevgeny crossed himself. "Some people say one thing, some say another," said he. "Good works are very well, but for my part all I should do is to prostrate myself before God. Like this . . ."

The monk got down on the floor, and lay full length with his forehead on the wood, and for a whole quarter of an hour lay like that, unmoving, none daring to disturb him or to break the silence. The woman who wished to be a saint seemed flabergasted.

At last Yevgeny got up and came forward to shake hands and say good-bye. "Must be going," said he, "come along!"

"The *batushka's* been having a glass," I heard one man say to another *sotto voce* behind me, but I don't think it was exactly that. Yevgeny had a way of putting himself into biblical situations, and I fancy he regarded the Bulgarian, who was really a

delightful, lovable woman, as the devil, tempting him to say or do something evil. His prostrating himself was a "get thee behind me, Satan.'

It was Yevgeny's way. He told me one morning afterwards how often he had come in contact with the devil. "I have lived a full life," said he, "have been stoned, put in prison, have been in dungeons, have been beaten, have been assaulted in the open street, but have always gone forward. What does the sum total of calamity on earth matter? Nothing can touch our heavenly destinies. Six times I have been arrested even by our Russian Government, on whose side I have generally spoken; think of that!"

"Why were you arrested?" I asked curiously.

"For no reason. Through the most extraordinary mistakes. Wherever I go I speak and act energetically. I throw myself among men, and strike out fire. I touch them, I make them repent of the old life, and turn to the new. And the devil is angry; he is always dogging me about. You ask how I got arrested; it was the devil managed it. He always wants to put a stopper on me. He even prevailed for a while; but I preached to the soldiers and gendarmes taking me, and I made them confess that they dare not lay rough hands on me. I walked to the prison a free man. Then I took the cross into prison. I stirred them up there—the robbers, thieves, murderers. I read to them about the two thieves, and let them see their choice. In

short there was such an uproar in the prison that the authorities soon understood how I had been tricked into gaol by the devil. I always got out quickly again, and always to find myself in extraordinary circumstances. The devil was always lying in my way trying to prevent me, and but for the grace of God, not only should I have been prevented but should long ago have been killed. I am sixty-five and I go on—*Slava Tebye Gospody!*"

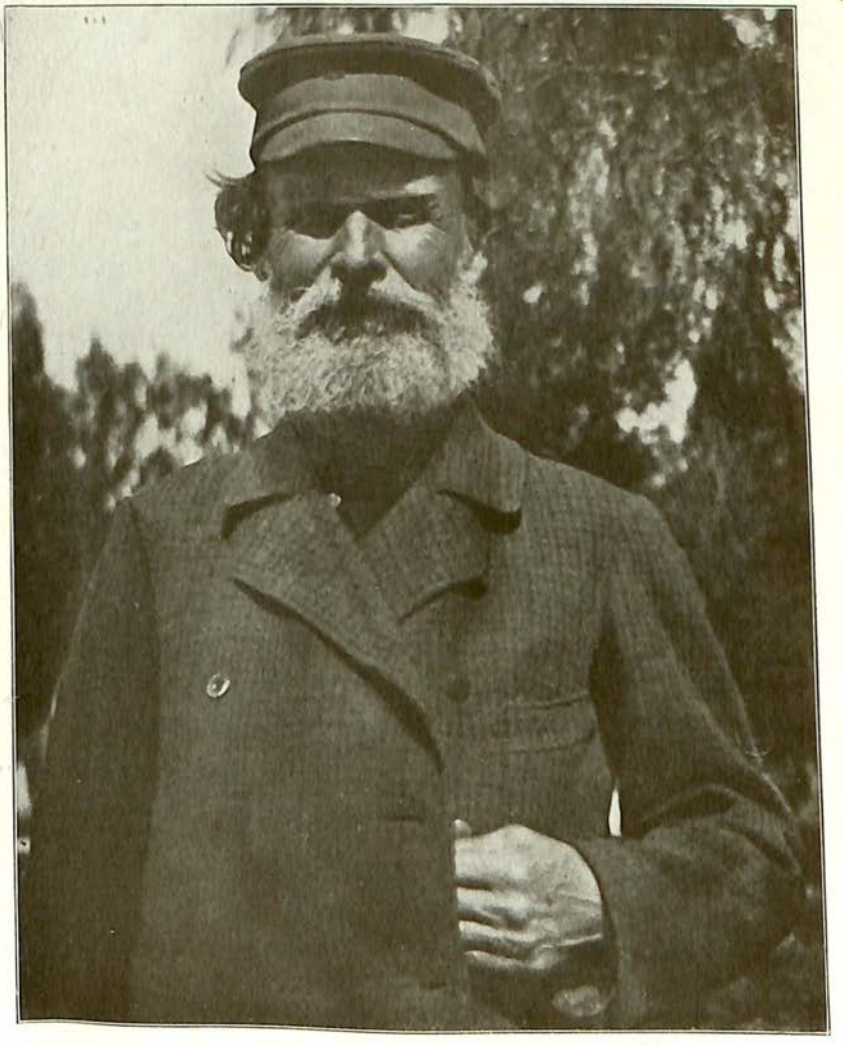
IV

DEAR OLD DYADYA[1]

LIUBOMUDROF was an original character, and there were many originals at Jerusalem; it needs a certain amount of originality to have had the idea to go there. Philip was a wolf in the fold, and Yevgeny, though a pilgrim, was also a religious insurrectionist like the monk Iliodor, whose doings have created so much official trouble in Russia. But dear old Dyadya, of whom I must say a few words, was just a simple worshipper—a typical gentle, reverent, innocuous, and outwardly-seeming-uninteresting pilgrim. He did nothing that was comic, and nothing that drew attention to him; he was, in short, one of the many. I liked him, and I often fell in with him and talked on the way. I never learnt his name, but I always addressed him as "uncle" (*dyadya*), and always thought of him as "dear old dyadya."

He was a poor peasant about fifty-five years old, rather frail in appearance, but having the powers of endurance of a Northerner. He came from the

[1] Both the letters y in *dyadya* are consonants, not vowels.



DEAR OLD DYADYA.

province of Tver. The photograph which I took of him gives a very fair idea of his simple countenance. He was commonly victimised by beggars, Arab shopkeepers, and porters, and so had often some little worry in his mind reflected in his face. He was, however, inwardly joyful. He had been vexed when he left home, for the villagers had said it was foolish to go to Jerusalem, even the priest had indicated that the journey might not be acceptable to God. But once Dyadya had got into the company of the other pilgrims he had felt reassured, and apart from the satisfaction of his soul he enjoyed himself immensely.

We went together to Golgotha and saw the life-size representation of the Crucifixion—the great cross standing beside the cleft in the rock where the actual cross is supposed to have been fixed—and we kissed the place where St. Mary and the beloved disciple stood looking at the sacrifice. We also kissed the place where Jesus was nailed to the cross, and the great rent which was made in the rock when He expired. Dyadya prayed a long time and shed tears of joy. When we came away he told me in confidence that he should buy a cross here at Golgotha, a large one, surrounded by little pictures showing the whole life of Jesus from the manger to the tomb, and he would take it home as an offering to the village church.

"They have nothing from Jerusalem in our little church," said he. "But I will buy one of these for

ten roubles, and that will be very good. It will remain in the church hundreds of years after I die, perhaps to the day of Judgment. Yes, it will be very good."

I think Dyadya got terribly tired that night in the Life-giving Grave. I met him next day high upon Eleonskaya Gora, where St. Mary appeared to St. Thomas, and dropped her girdle from the heavens. Dyadya was sitting on a seat, and looked absolutely worn out. The church was full to overflowing, many being obliged to kneel in the open air outside, and we sat on a seat in a nunnery garden and heard the service. We looked down on a grand scene, the dark valley of the Jordan over which rolled many clouds, and the far-off silvery sea. Dyadya had scarcely enough "go" in him to be interested. He longed for a kettleful of tea, and a loaf. At least so I surmised. I had in my pocket three musty dates of the cheap and nasty sort. They were, in fact, the relict of a not very pleasant pound. I gave them to the old man, and he ate them with relish, even licking the stones clean. Then I counselled him to lie flat out on the seat and rest a little, and he went off into a quiet doze.

This mountain is taken by the Greek Church to be that of the ascension of Jesus, and on our way down we came to the cave of St. Pelagia, where by tradition the disciples first set up a cross as the symbol of the Christian Faith. This seemed

to give my old friend some further satisfaction in thinking about the cross he intended to take home to the village church. He would be doing at his little village what the disciples did at St. Pelagia's cave. I think the thought materially lightened his steps as we plodded through the valley of Jehoshaphat once more. We had to pass the Garden of Gethsemane, and there we pressed our lips to the ancient scarred stone of porphyry which is said to be part of the column by which Jesus stood when Judas kissed him. The monks certainly have had no sense of humour in the disposal of their archæological heritage. That, however, was not a thought to enter the head of any pious pilgrim, and Dyadya never doubted anything for a moment. He believed that the stone of anointing at the entrance to the Church of the Sepulchre was the very stone on which the precious Body of Jesus was laid by Joseph of Arimathea, and on which it was swathed in fine linen by Mary, and anointed with precious oils. He believed that the basin in Pilate's house was the very basin; that the cleft at Golgotha into which he put his old "unworthy" hands was the very cleft; that the Sacred Fire was actually received on Holy Saturday by miracle direct from God; that the Bethlehem manger was the very manger; and that the place where the priest at Jordan dipped the cross in the water was actually Bethabara, the point where Jesus came to John the Baptist, and

over which the heavens opened. I for one was not astonished at his beliefs. Why should he doubt anything? It will be a sad day for pilgrimaging when the peasant grins at the shrines, gives his barren money-offering instead of prayer, and hurries on from sight to sight.

When Dyadya had got home and had fetched his kettleful of boiling water from the hostelry kitchen, I came over to him and we made a meal. By a stroke of luck we had procured hot potato pies from the little restaurant where Yevgeny had created the scene, and we had raisins and bread.

"Ah," said I, "it's good to be in Jerusalem, is it not?"

"How!" he replied, in the stern voice of an elder to a frivolous young one. "Of course it is good to be where God walked. Of course it is good." He always spoke of Jesus as God, I may add, and seemed to have some uncompromising conviction on that point. Dyadya's faith was as sound as a bell.

"When are you going to Jordan?" asked he.

"Well, with the caravan, of course," I replied. "You know it is all arranged for next Wednesday. A great number of pilgrims are going, two thousand perhaps, so as to be ready for Holy Week. The priests will go down in procession carrying the ikons, and will consecrate the water. All those who weren't there for the great service in January will go then."

"Are you going on foot?" he asked. "If so,

tell me when we start; perhaps the night before we can go to Lazarus' tomb to sleep. We will start out together."

It turned out that I had many acquaintances on the road to Jordan, and that I saw "Uncle" little enough. I remember how he came into the hostelry at Jericho, dusty and worn, and how he sat down to the abominable dock-leaf soup, at the last gasp of his strength as it seemed, but still quite happy and cheerful. "God suffered *so* here," he would say. "What is our suffering to compare with His!" The old man never grumbled, even on the Nazareth journey, though he nearly died coming home. And always on his bushy, hairy face there was a look as if he felt he was enjoying real life, doing the things which other people only read of. He grew lean and sunburnt with tramping. I often sat with him under the pepper trees in the hostelry garden, and I had opportunity to notice. I am sure, when he returned to that village of his, with a sack of relics and mementoes on his back, that Golgotha cross for the village church under his arm, that bright face and happy old heart, he must not only have convinced the unsympathetic, but have given one or two others the inspiration to follow the same way. How he would talk when he got home! I saw the words saving up in him.

V

ON THE BANKS OF THE JORDAN

THE modern Protestant says, "Live well, use your wealth with a sense of responsibility to God, be sober, be just to your neighbour, be temperate in your passions." The Russian says: "All that is minor matter; it is chiefly necessary to die well." Breaking the commandments means for the Protestant breaking with God until repentance; but for the Russian peasant there is no such feeling of breaking with God. The drunkard, the thief, and the murderer are as intimate with God as the just man; and perhaps even more intimate. Life doesn't matter very much; what matters are the everyday ties between man and God, that for which the ikon stands, and the great rites by which man enters into communion with his higher destiny. All the rites of the Russian Church are very solemn, and they are invested with great importance. Certainly the funeral, the laying out of the dead body for its long rest, and the hymns and prayers sung over it are felt to be not only impressive to the living, but good for the one who is dead.

BUYING HIS SHROUD.

It was amazing to me to see the extent to which the pilgrims sought in Jerusalem tokens for the clothing of their dead bodies, and how much their thoughts were centred on death and the final resurrection morning. They sanctified crosses at the grave, little ones to wear round their necks in the tomb, and larger ones to lie on their breasts; they brought their death-shrouds and cross-embroidered caps to dip them in Jordan; they took Jerusalem earth to put in their coffins, and even had their arms tattooed with the word Jerusalem, and with pictures of the Virgin; so that they might lie so marked in the grave, and indeed that they might rise again so marked, and show it in heaven. By these things they felt they obtained a sort of sanctity.

The going to Jordan was essentially something done against the Last Day. It was very touching that on the day before the caravan set out, the peasants cut linen to the shape of the "Stone of the Anointing," which stands outside the Sepulchre, and placed that linen with their death-shrouds on that stone for blessing, feeling that they were doing for their dead bodies just what Mary and Joseph of Arimathea did for the body of Jesus, and on the same stone. They felt it would be particularly good to rise from death in shrouds thus sanctified.

I suppose several hundreds of pilgrims took their shrouds to the Grave on the day before the caravan set out; in the hostelry there was an unrolling of

an amount of clean linen most amazing as the possession of such dirty people. What a bustle of preparation there was on the night before! the mending of *lapti*, the filling of the sacks with things to be dipped in the stream, the procuring of bottles and cans for bringing back the water of the river. For most of us it was an extraordinary occasion, a pilgrimage within a pilgrimage; for those who were in Palestine for the first time it was the first occasion of tramping a distance in such a crowd. The caravan does not mean travelling like gipsies in houses on wheels as once I fondly supposed, but the journeying together of a great concourse of people on foot, or with camels and mules, in the East.

There were more than a thousand of us that set out next morning at dawn, even before it was light. Liubomudrof was there, dear old Dyadya, the boy from the Urals. Yevgeny was in a cart, Abraham was there among a knot of *babas*, the old man from Tobolsk to whom I gave sixpence, and a host of others with whom I was acquainted. It was a long, straggling crowd. In front rode a Turkish policeman, and one of the Palestine Society's gorgeously dressed Montenegrins, and a similar escort formed our protection at the very rear; there were a great number of panniered asses carrying pilgrims or pilgrims' sacks; and Arab boys with poles ran at their sides prodding, beating and hulloaing; a number of vans carrying those

who cared to be carried. Most of the pilgrims were on foot, and most carried their own packs; some were in overcoats, some carried umbrellas to guard against the sun. There were about equal numbers of men and women, and the women almost without exception walked, the broad-backed mules offering them no temptation. We started out at a smart pace, as we wished to make progress while the weather was cool: we knew that when the sun got up, it would be more arduous to keep up on the dusty, shadeless road.

We passed the brook Kedron, the Mount of Olives, and Bethany, and were well across the Judæan wilderness before the weather became unpleasant. At Bethany we were joined by a fresh party who had gone out to the monastery by Lazarus' tomb the night before, in order to make the day's journey to Jericho less tiring—the road to Jordan is a very difficult one, even for the strong pilgrim.

My companion was a strange old fellow from Voronezh Government. He was evidently very poor. He wore old slit and ragged cotton trousers and no coat, but only a thick, homespun linen shirt which showed his sunburnt bosom. Over his back he held the tattered remains of a red rug. Round his neck was a piece of ordinary string from which an old wooden cross hung on his breast, and he wore an ancient mitre-shaped sheepskin hat. He was very clean, and in his way fine-looking and

simple; he held himself erect, and marched rather than walked, at a funeral pace. When I saw him first from behind, he was all by himself, and the look of him reminded me of the picture of a victim of an *auto da fé*. I must say he was a strange figure, a strange person. He didn't encourage me to walk with him, and though he was quite polite, and answered my questions sweetly and simply, he never entered into any conversation of his own account. He walked slowly, but he never stopped to take rest. I believe that at Jericho he simply passed on, and did not stay as we did at the hostelry there. Most of the pilgrims rested at the Apostles' Well, where it is said the Apostles used to drink water and refresh themselves, but my companion went on without notice. Even at the Khan Khasrura, the inn to which the good Samaritan is supposed to have taken the man whom the thieves had beset, my new acquaintance only looked in, saw the pilgrims drinking water and munching crusts, and went on further.

Clouds of dust pursued us over the mountains. The road rising from the grandeur of Bethany wound in long curves round the breast of the hills. We were all alone in the world, only occasionally there came a line of mules or camels with dark Bedouin Arabs passing or overtaking us. I stood at a corner, and looked back on the long, labouring train of black figures on the baked white road, bundles on their backs, staves in their hands, and

hemp or bark boots on their feet. The bend of their backs as they toiled upward seemed a sight that must be very acceptable in the eyes of God.

The pilgrims did reverence at the brook Cherith, where God sent the ravens to Elijah, and deep down in the ravine saw the monastery of St. George, built on the place where the birth of the Virgin Mary is supposed to have been announced to her father Joachim. The pilgrim from Voronezh crossed himself very devoutly at this point, and when we resumed our tramp upward I ventured to offer him some white bread and raisins, which to my surprise he accepted very gladly, crossing himself and calling upon God to save me. An hour and a half later we reached the pass over the mountains, and saw lying before us the Dead Sea and the whole valley of the Jordan, almost the same picture as was visible from the summit of the Mount of Olives at Jerusalem. Far away in dark shadow stood the steep Moabite mountains, and to the right of them the Ammonite mountains, amongst whose summits the pilgrims marked out what they took to be Mount Nebo, where Moses died, and from whence the prophet saw the Promised Land, though he might not enter it.

We were high up on the right bank of a great ravine, and more than a thousand feet below ran a white foaming mountain stream. The rocks led down majestically to the little river, they sat about

it in extraordinary grandeur, the silent powers of nature in the presence of life.

Here we passed the first representatives of Western Europe, a young Frenchman who suddenly pointed out the galleries of the rocks to his wife, "Regardez, comme c'est beau là." The pilgrims stared at the couple and said, "Nice people. Just what you see in Moscow."

An hour's descent brought us to the poplar trees and palms of what was once Jericho, and what is now the little Arab hamlet of Erikha. Nothing remains now of what was once a famous city. Erikha is a miserable hamlet of two hundred people, and no more. It has two grand hotels which stand out in startling contrast to the huts of the Arabs. There is not even a large church in the village, and the Russian Shelter is an insignificant building scarcely fit to accommodate fifty people, far less the fifteen hundred who came there this day.

We were all led to tables in the open air under pleasant shady trees, and there regaled with soup and tea. The soup, if it could be said to have any colour, was green; and large leaves, which I took to be dock, floated in it. It was served in dishes the size of washbasins, there were wooden spoons all round, and ten or twelve peasants sat about each dish. The tea was hot and clear, and just a tinge of yellow colour in it told that it was tea and not simply boiling water. After the meal there was a service in the hostelry yard, and then rest.

Father Yevgeny, who made himself very conspicuous in all the arrangements, found a room set apart for clean pilgrims. I had settled down to a pallet on the floor of the general dormitory, and was wondering whether I would not go out and find some fresh and open place among the mountains, when Yevgeny came across me and hurriedly brought me to his room. "There's just one bedstead left," said he. "I've been looking for a likely sort of person to give it to." This was very fortunate for me, as the general room was soon so crowded with sleepers that it was impossible to get across without treading on arms and legs. I felt we were rather selfish, however, "the clean public," and I fetched old Liubomudrof in, for he was dead beat. The veins stood out on his brow, and I counselled him to get a lift in a cart on the morrow, but he said he would go all the way to Jordan on foot, and perhaps coming home he'd get on a mule; it didn't matter so much going home, and if it were to save him dying or going mad he'd do it.

Next day early we were all hurrying along the Jordan valley road. The mountains were grand before us, pale stars shone down upon us as we kicked through the deep, white, stifling dust. We were stealing a march on the heat of the day, and with good cause. Before we reached St. John the Baptist monastery the sun rose blindingly across the horizon of the perfectly clear sky, and its rays rushed mercilessly to us as against the only things left

living in the desert. We were glad to call a halt at the monastery, and rest in the shade of its high, whitewashed walls. It was about seven miles from Jericho, I suppose, and we were already quite near the Jordan stream. Some of the pilgrims went straight ahead to find the river and bathe in it, but the great majority waited for the priests and monks of the monastery to take us down and consecrate the water.

There was a tremendous clamour whilst we stood about this great white gleaming monastery. A score or so of Arab hawkers were waiting for us with soap stamped with portraits of Jesus or John the Baptist, with bottles for the water, with crosses and rosaries, and all manner of religious keepsakes. A novice of the monastery was distributing brown loaves, another sugar, and a third wandered about with a gigantic iron kettle full of boiling water. Somewhere in the background were tables on trestles, and an abundance of mugs for our breakfast. A great number of Christian Arabs had also come up from beyond Jordan in order to participate in the great service on the banks, and splendid figures they looked with their swarthy faces and white cloaks and turbans. We waited about an hour, and during that time many of the peasants obtained the honour of holding the ikons and the crosses that were to be taken in procession. Out came a great gilt cross swathed with bath towels, and the pilgrims all crowded round to kiss it. One by one the peasants,

KISSING THE TOWEL-SWATHED CROSS—A FINE BACK.

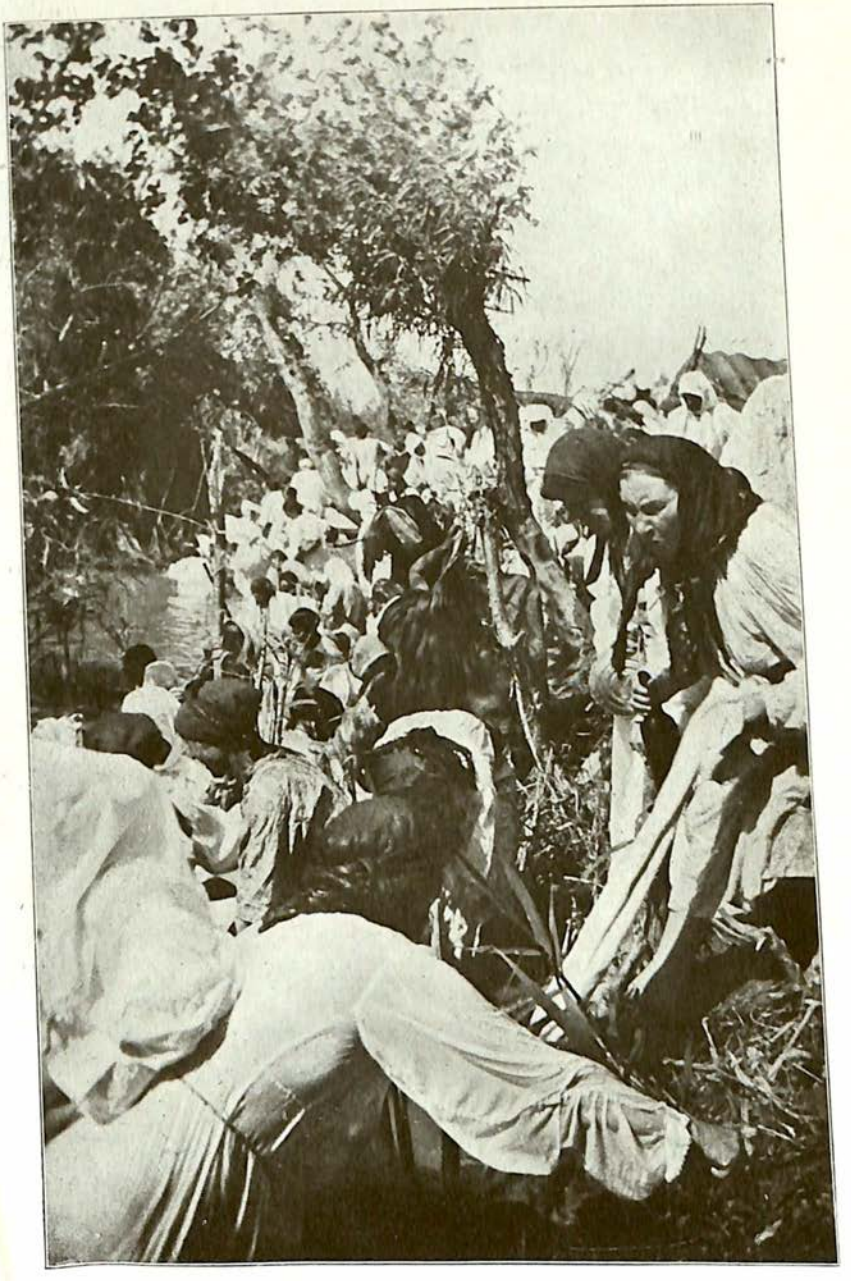
men and women, came up and reverently kissed it. After the cross came two ikons similarly swathed, a picture of St. John the Baptist, and a representation of the descending of the Holy Spirit on Jesus as He was coming up out of the river at baptism. Suddenly the clergy appeared, and with them a number of shaggy-haired monks. The ikon bearers and the cross bearer formed in a line, and at a word from the officiating priest marched forward, the thousand pilgrims trooping after them. We went down a steep road between clay banks, and it seemed as if we were descending into the bowels of the earth. There was not the gleam of a blade of grass about, and high above us blazed the tyrant of the desert in unapproachable magnificence. But we were quickly delivered from this ugly stretch of what is really the ancient shore of the Dead Sea, and at a turn found ourselves in the running oasis of the river banks, a little paradise of green fields and hedges of oleander and tamarisk.

We crossed one field and passed into another, there to be met by a crowd of half-dressed people who had come down before us. Here all the bushes were hung with drying linen, there were great piles of clothes on the grass, in one corner was a tent church, and in another a Turkish *araka* shop. We arrived singing a hymn in chorus, and as we stood in sight of the little turbid river racing underneath its weeping willows, all the pilgrims raised their hats and crossed themselves. We had arrived at that

point in the river's course where, according to one tradition, Jesus came to be baptized; and where, according to another, the Jews had forded when they came to Canaan after their servitude in Egypt.

In a great miscellaneous crowd the peasants began to undress and to step into their white shrouds, the women into long robes like night-dresses, the men into full white shirts and pantaloons. Those who came unprovided stood quite naked on the banks. Then the priest, when he had given the pilgrims time to prepare, began taking the service for the sanctification of the water. The ikons and the cross were ranged around a wooden platform over the water. Calling out in a loud voice, "Come, ye thirsty, and take water gladly from the wells of salvation," the priest bent down, and in a silver basin scooped up water from the running stream. Then standing in front of the basin he read the prayers for the sanctification of the water. Candles were dealt out and lighted, and then to the music of the hymn, "They baptize Thee in Jordan, O Lord," he dipped the towel-swathed cross first in the basin and then in the river three times. At the dipping of the cross as many of the pilgrims as could get near plunged into the water, crossing themselves and shivering.

It was a wonderful sight, that plunge into the life-giving stream, that rush from the bank of glistering, sun-lit figures into the strange little yellow-



ALL IN THEIR SHROUDS ON THE BANKS OF THE JORDAN.

green river. But though so many went in at the dipping of the holy cross, their elimination from the numbers on the banks only served to show how many more were waiting behind. For a whole hour there was a scene that baffles description, the most extraordinary mingling of men and women all in white, dry and gleaming, or wet and dripping. Then no one seemed to have brought towels, and the naked stood or sat in the sun, drying themselves. Many pilgrims who had been in the water once, took off their clinging shrouds, and strolling across the fields in Adamite simplicity, hung them on the bushes to dry. Having done this, they went in again in another suit of funeral garb, or they sat and dried themselves, or put their old clothes over their damp limbs just as they were. The Christian Arabs stood on the shore in their shrouds, and made hysterical chants and speeches. For the whole of the hour the water was full of bathers; some took the opportunity to have a good swim, some poor old women stood with their toes in the river mud, and couldn't get out though they wished to. I remember especially four ancient dames all over sixty, unprovided with shrouds, standing in the water holding on to one another, brown-bodied and ruined-looking, with crosses round their necks just showing, and their lean, naked shoulders sticking up out of the water. They were crossing themselves and kissing one another, promising to meet in heaven, shivering and gurgling all the while, obviously waiting for some-

one who had forgotten to come and help them out. Some others crawled up the steep clayey bank, and looking round them, wondered where they had left their clothes; everything was in such a muddle that it was difficult to find anything. I suppose some pilgrims went into the water with their money tied to their bodies, others left it in charge of some other pilgrims on the shore, though most must have simply left it in the heaps with their shed clothing. There were many Arab muleteers wandering about among the things, yet I heard of no robberies. There were also many hawkers of brandy, and despite the fact that it was in the Great Fast, some old pilgrims took a glass lest they should be ill after going into the cold water. The river was, I may say in parenthesis, quite warm.

All my acquaintances bathed in the stream. The young man from the Urals went across several times —no mean feat, for the current was swift. Dear old Dyadya let himself down gingerly by a branch of a weeping willow, but slipping, went right over his head in the stream. Yevgeny, being a monk, went far away from the sight of the female form divine, and let himself in privately, solemnly anathematising any devils that might be about before he went down into the stream. Liubomudrof went through a little private ceremony of putting himself into his shroud, crossing the neck opening before he put it over his head, and he also trusted his weight to a willow branch, and slipped without accident into the

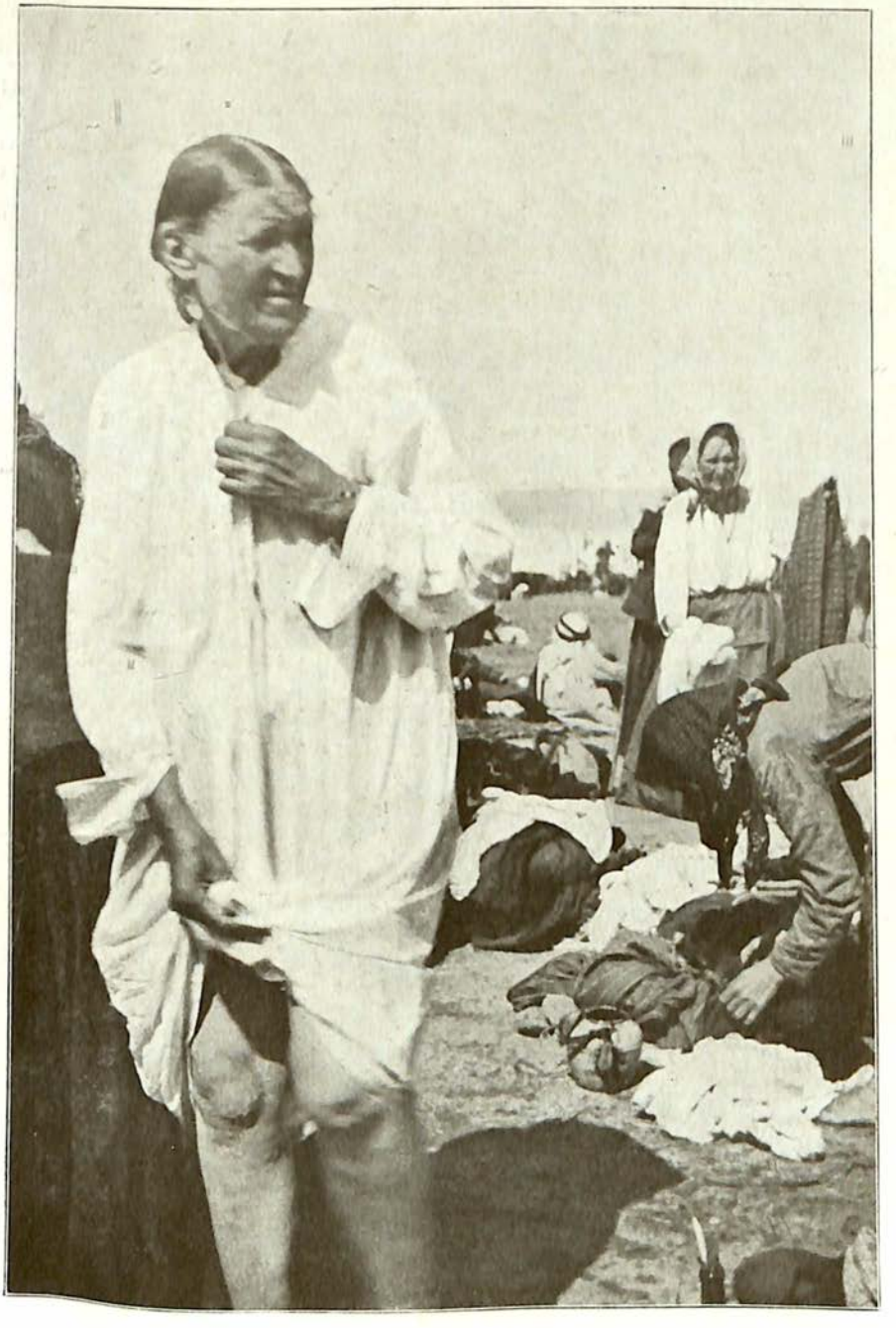
stream. When he was dried and dressed he said to me, "Let's go and get some tea somewhere. I fear the effects of the water; for the hale and strong cold water is a blessing, but for the weak, even with God's blessing, it is almost necessary, perhaps, to follow it with a drink of vodka. I don't feel ill. No, I don't feel any different. I should like some *araka*, but I haven't tasted alcohol since I promised to God. Come, let us go to the Dead Sea shore, and the monastery of St. Guerassim. There they say the monks have always tea ready for those come up from Jordan."

So with a farewell glance at the field now covered with drying linen, I prepared to set out with him. The Çomic had dipped the shrouds he bought in Dmitri's shop, and also the death-caps, and had wrung them dry and put all in his pack. Many pilgrims cut canes from the bushes, and putting their shrouds on these hung them over their backs to dry, and walked to St. Guerassim as it were with white flags. About a dozen of us collected together, and then a whole crowd of dripping pilgrims in white came about us to ask where we were going, and by what road. We pointed out the way to them and they promised to follow.

. . . . . .

St. Guerassim, when he was a hermit in the wilderness, met a lion crying out with pain and holding up its paw to have a thorn pulled out. The lions seem to have made many appeals of this kind to

the early Christians, and Guerassim was not less backward than Androcles and the other heroes. He bound up the poor beast's paw and led it to the monastery, where for five years it gratefully served the old man, even doing domestic labours for him. The other brothers of the monastery also made use of the lion's services, and even set him to watch the monastery ass whilst it was grazing. One day the lion returned to the monastery without the ass, and Guerassim thinking that the natural leonine appetite had accounted for the beast of labour, said to the lion, "Henceforth you shall be the monastery ass." Panniers were put on the king of beasts and he carried their grain, their pitchers, and he brought water from Jordan. The lion, who seems to have been more saintly even than Guerassim himself, served meekly, and in those days when the pilgrims came down to Jordan, he not only brought up water, but chased the peasants from the sacred river to the monastery, where they paid the brothers good money to pray for the health of their bodies and the peace of soul of their fathers and grandfathers. At last, coming back one day, the lion found that Guerassim was dead. When the saint was buried the monks showed the lion the tomb, and there he stretched himself out and expired. Poor old lion! On him rests the name and fame of the monastery of St. Guerassim in the desert, and now, though the lion is dead, yet his repute still brings the pilgrims along from Jordan and for the same purpose. I



BY THE JORDAN.

Grandma doesn't remember where she put her clothes.

told dear old Dyadya the story, and he seemed highly edified. He knew of the lion, of course, but had never heard the details. "It only shows to what sainthood the people attained long ago," said he; "we've outlived all that." I was fain to agree.

It was a terribly hot walk along that Jordan gully to St. Guerassim. Those who had thought to bring umbrellas to keep off the sun were lucky. The very mountains round about us glowed with reflected sunshine. We were again on the old Dead Sea shore, three thousand feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea, the lowest place on earth. The air was oppressive; we had the sense of the vicinity of Sodom and Gomorrah. Poor Liubomudrof! I thought he would collapse, and I made him untwist one of his wet shrouds and wear it under his hat and down his back. I, for my part, wore a rough bath towel that I had taken with me. I am sure it was only a short way, not more than four miles, but we felt we had never walked so far in a day before. How joyfully we rested at the flower-crowned oasis of Guerassim's well and sipped the warm salt water! At last we stood at the gates of the monastery with its high, blue-white walls of whitewashed bricks. Liubomudrof had his wish: there was tea for all comers in a long, dark, shady cellar—tea, I may say of a saltish taste, made with something not unlike Dead Sea water, and there were basins of black olives to eat with it, but, alas! no sugar and no bread.

Scarcely had we taken our seats when the other pilgrims began to arrive; they came in scores and hundreds, and swarmed over the monastery. Soon our cellar was full, and not another person could get a seat at the tables. Indeed, there was such a crush opposite us that the seat, a swaying plank placed across two empty casks, suddenly gave way with a crash and let the pilgrims to the floor. It was a scene of much merriment.

For all of us it was a great relief to rest in the shade. Liubomudrof was next to me, and we helped one another liberally to tea and olives. He had saved a great lump of bread from Jerusalem, and as I had none he shared with me. We all drank an enormous quantity of that salt tea, and all the time we sat drinking we heard the grind of the monastery pump which less fortunate pilgrims outside were glad to use to get a drink even of diluted Dead Sea brine. It seems that after the lion's decease the monks had a well sunk in their monastery, and so dispensed with that arduous water-carrying to and fro from Jordan.

What a clamour had invaded this stilly monastery! But half an hour before, it had not had a witness of life, but stood still and gleaming on the desert under the noonday sun; now a thousand men and women in black clothes and long hair had suddenly swarmed over it—from the far-away villages of Russia!

What a scene it was may be understood from the

fact, that the monastery was built four square round a little courtyard. On the other side of the yard, and facing the entrance passage, rose two twin stone stairways up to the belfry in which hung the great black bell. Just under the bell, and right round the square, ran a stone gallery, half in brightest sunlight, half in darkest shadow, and all up and down these stairways and along the corridors surged a crowd of Russian men and women looking down at another crowd surging about the monastery pump in the middle of the courtyard below. All were shouting, laughing, and calling; and above all sounded the ancient, harsh-toned monastery bell.

When Liubomudrof, Dyadya and I had had enough tea we went up the stone steps to the gallery, and sat down in the shady part. Some went down to the Dead Sea to look at the waters which covered the cities of Sin. Others crowded into the office of the monastery to subscribe for prayers. I went to the room where the names of the people for whom prayers were to be said were being taken down. There were three monks busy writing in ancient over-scrawled registers as fast as the peasants could call out the names. The room was packed. Along one side was an immense picture of St. Guerassim and the Lion, and on the table was a whole stack of little oleograph miniatures of the same. Each peasant on giving in the names of the "to-be-prayed-for" received an oleograph with a blessing from St. Guerassim in the desert. I noticed that Liubomu-

drof paid out two roubles to the monks. But then he had brought thirty or forty roubles which had been given him by the villagers at home, and had doled out money and mentioned such names as he thought fit, not only here at St. Guerassim, but at St. John the Baptist monastery and in Jerusalem. He purposed going to Mount Sinai on a camel after Easter, and no doubt would ask for prayers and give an alms all the way. Asked whether he purposed taking a bottle of Dead Sea water back to Russia, he grinned in a peculiar way, and called out in his hollow, oracular voice, "No, although it has been done by pilgrims before now, for the evil purposes of others in Russia. A witch I knew asked for a bottle of the water to be brought to her, and on the night she received it, all her cattle fell dead. Some of the more educated go to bathe in the sea to improve their health, cure rheumatism, king's evil, and the influence of the evil eye. I was even advised to take a dip. But can Satan cast out Satan? No! And would it be true to God to bathe in the holy Jordan and then to wash in the sins of Sodom? No!" This seemed conclusive, and if that had not sufficed, a monk came and warned us that if we bathed there we should feel such an itch in all our limbs after it as might drive us out of our minds. So we did not test the statement that it is impossible to sink in the Dead Sea, and we did not take any water back in our bottles.

We spent much time round about St. Guerassim,

CROSSING HERSELF IN THE STREAM.

for we were in the wilderness where Jesus was tempted, and but half-an-hour's walk westward brought us to "Forty-day mountain"—a mountain of innumerable caves which have been occupied by hermits and world-forsakers since the earliest days of Christianity. Here at the half-way point was a little monastery over the cave where Christ is supposed to have often lain. The peasants went in and prostrated themselves at the little church in the cave, where in the darkness candles are ever burning. The view from the mountain was a trifle uninspiring, considering that the devil is supposed to have shown therefrom all the kingdoms of the world. I am afraid it only convinced me that it was a much higher crag on which the devil and Jesus stood—the summit of Imagination. However, there was a grand view, and the idea gratified the pilgrims immensely.

The day wore on to evening, and half the pilgrims found their way back to Jericho to sleep, whilst the other half sought out the monastery of St. George by the brook Cherith, where Elijah was fed by the ravens.

For my part, though the way was reputed to be dangerous, I set off slowly and easily along the highroad for Jerusalem all by myself. I had tramped the Caucasus, which is three times more dangerous than Palestine, so I had plenty of nerve for the walk. If I were tired I resolved to sleep in a cave at Bethany.

It was a delightful journey. One realised one's real strength and fitness once the sun had gone down behind the mountains, and one awakened to the beauty of the country. For Palestine is beautiful—or rather, it is picturesque. The grey stone of rock or ruin harmonises everything—the red-faced, bright-eyed Syrian women, the coal-black Bedouin Arabs, the camel flocks, the cow camels and their lively little calves browsing on the mountain side, the dainty sheep and goats, the wild shepherds with guns slung across their backs.

The earth was grateful for the shadow of night. I caught up a long train of high green camels going to Jerusalem. On three of them were richly clad Arabs, and on the others were heavily laden panniers. I walked by the side of them, and as it grew darker they seemed to grow taller. But they moved gracefully on the road, undulating their bodies and balancing their burdens like living cradles. One saw why they are called ships of the desert.

It was eleven o'clock at night by the time I reached Bethany, and it was after all too dark to find a pleasant cave, so I went on to Jerusalem. Leaving the camels behind, I went more briskly along the winding road that takes one up the crags beside the Mount of Olives, and down below I saw the train of camels moving mysteriously forward, a procession of shadows.

At last, Jerusalem; and I was glad, though the

city itself seemed more fearsome at night than the road from Jericho had done. The booths were all shuttered, the shops shut. The streets were veritably dark tunnels. Prowling, nervous dogs slunk along searching for refuse, and seemed terribly frightened at the approach of a human being. At an upper window near the Church of the Grave were lights and music. Some one was playing an Armenian viol, another a great thrumming tambourine, whilst a third was yelling and chanting Trans-Caucasian strains. Whilst I listened the town watch came round, and as they passed me eyed me somewhat suspiciously. I came to no harm, however, and reached the postern of the Russian settlement, where I waked the sleeping porter and made him open the gates to me. When I got to the hostelry and to the curtained apartment, what was my astonishment to find a lamp burning, and Philip busy wrapping up in bits of newspaper little tablets of Bethlehem earth of which he had bought forty pounds the morning before. He had not reckoned on my coming back that night, and as each tablet had to be wrapped up separately to save it from breaking on the boat journey home, he had seized the opportunity to put a night in at the work. He seemed a little vexed, but we made tea, nevertheless, and supped it cheerfully. Then I laid myself down to sleep on a vacant bench near at hand, and was soon lost in the world of dreams.

AFTER THE DIP IN THE STREAM: DRYING HIS SHROUD ON A STICK ON HIS BACK.

V

THE CARAVAN TO NAZARETH

I

NAZARETH

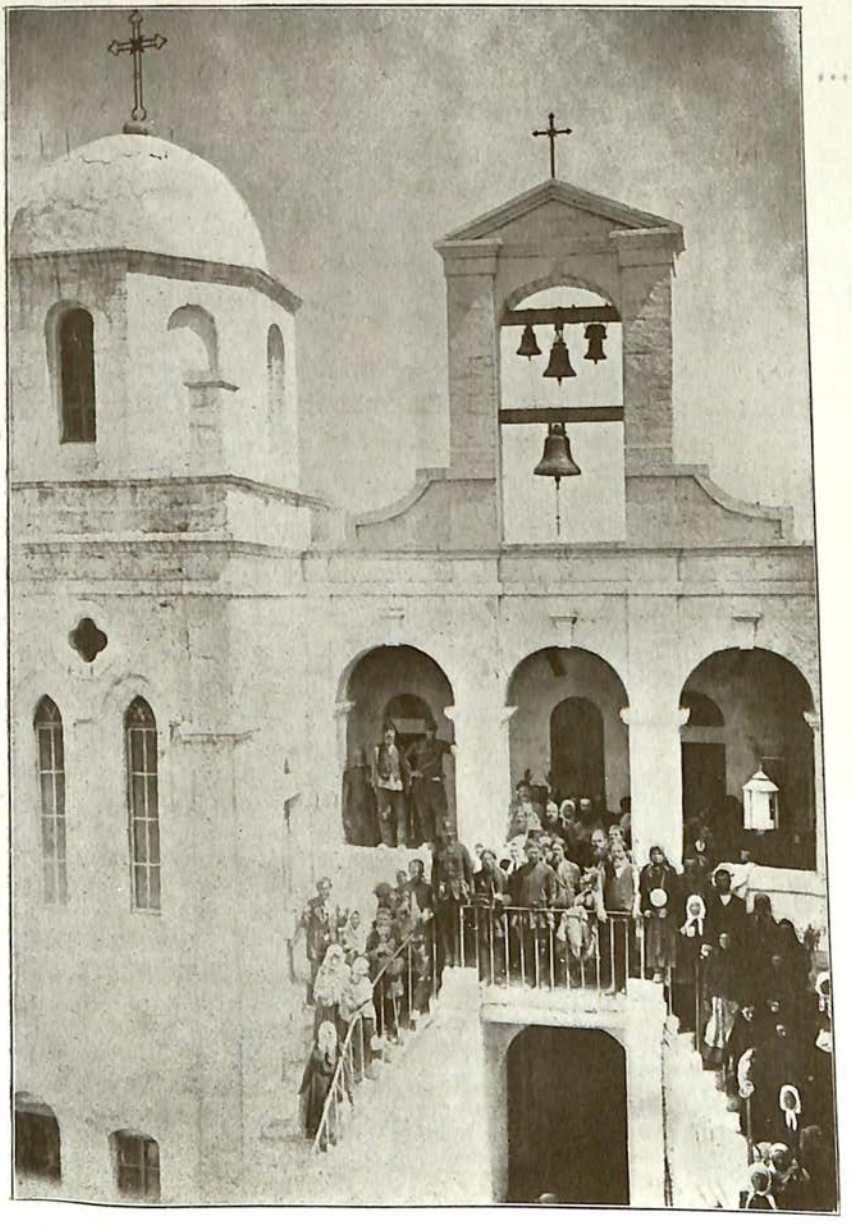
WHILST we were at Jordan the greatest caravan of the year was nearing its home-coming to Jerusalem; the annual Lenten party of over a thousand peasants was returning from the pilgrimage to the shrines of Nazareth.

Though it is less than a hundred miles from Jerusalem to the Sea of Galilee, the journey is a hard one for the pilgrim going on foot. The road is heavy—very stony, dusty, and mountainous, and the heat of the sun overhead is trying to the heavily clothed northern man and woman. Every year on the journey many pilgrims die. Even for the man who has tramped from the White to the Black Sea of his native land, the journey to Nazareth and back again, once accomplished, is a matter of glory and of thanks to God.

The caravan starts early in Lent, and generally aims to arrive at Nazareth by March 25th, in order to celebrate the Annunciation at the Virgin's well. This year, Easter and the Annunciation fell on the same day, and as every orthodox man and woman

must be at the Sepulchre at Easter, the caravan set out earlier than usual, and the keeping of the Annunciation at Nazareth was foregone. It was solemnised at Jerusalem instead with Easter.

The first day of the journey is an easy one, only nine miles of the way being accomplished. The long procession of pilgrims leaves the north gate of the Russian settlement in the morning, and straggles in a file a mile long all the way to the Damascus gate of the city of Jerusalem. Little order is kept. Those who wish to hasten, go ahead; and those who go slowly fall behind. There is often as much as ten versts between the first pilgrim and the last—the young man of seventeen goes fast, at fourscore it is too late a week. Away past the graves of the kings, and over the brook Kedron the long procession winds, and the pilgrims climb one of the hills outside the city, Scopus, to look back, and commend themselves to the care of God, and ask for their pilgrimage a blessed fulfilment. They file away toward ancient Ramah, where, prostrating themselves to a church-crowned mountain lying on the west, the pilgrims do reverence to the grave of the prophet Samuel. There is a rest, and then all troop on to Ramalla, the first stage of the pilgrimage. It is only midday, and further progress might be attempted, but there are many miles to go before a place of accommodation is to be found. Sensible pilgrims sleep out on the hillside if the weather is dry; otherwise they must take their places in the crush at the little



INSIDE THE COURTYARD OF THE MONASTERY OF ST. GUERASSIM IN THE DESERT.

mission church, or find a lodging with hospitable or mercenary Syrians. The night's shelter is going to be a matter of increasing sorrow as the days of tiredness add themselves to one another, and the night's refreshment is not given.

Next day betimes the caravan goes on. All the pilgrims are astir before dawn, and on the road at sunrise. Night gives way to morning on the hills, and the dark sky is filled with light. The Palestine dawns are wonderful, for the morning becomes hot so quickly.' So strong is the alliance of the Desert and the Sun that the very sky, as it is gradually lit up, seems to have been damaged by the heat of the day before, and to be a little dusty. The roads are deep in dust, and through the dust the pilgrims hurry forward to cover as much space as possible before the enemy begins to glare and burn.

At El-bireh there are ruins of an ancient church founded on a touching legend such as peasant pilgrims love: here Joseph and Mary, returning from Jerusalem to Nazareth, are supposed to have noticed the absence of their twelve-year-old child when He, Jesus, was in the Temple teaching the people and confounding the scribes.

About an hour later the caravan turns aside from the high-road in order to visit Bethel, a little collection of houses and ruins up in the hills. The pilgrim enriches the harvest of his experiences, for he looks upon the place where Jacob had the vision of the ladder from earth to heaven, the angels ascending

and descending. The path climbs upward amidst boulders and ravines, and is as uneven as can be. The pilgrims take rest frequently in the shadow of the rocks or of the olive trees. The goal of the second day's march is Nablous, anciently Sychem, near which is Jacob's well, where Jesus conversed with the Samaritan woman—twenty-seven miles, not much to walk in a day, but equal to thirty-five in level Russia.

At Nablous the whole troop is besieged by beggar children, dark-skinned and naked, some whining for coppers, others bullying, some even stone-throwing. The poor peasant disburses farthings and half-farthings "for the love of God," but does not know how to deal with this army of little rascals. I, for my part, solved the problem by buying figs, three pounds for a halfpenny, and making the little beggars scramble.

The population of Nablous is exclusively Mahometan, so that it is not a very convenient place for a Christian staying the night, but a mile beyond the town is a large Turkish barracks where most of the pilgrims find shelter.

Five miles from Nablous is Samaria, a town on a high hill, and now called Sebastia, and the pilgrims go out of their way to pray at the ruins of the once magnificent church standing on the spot where John the Baptist was buried by his disciples, and where by tradition the prophet Elisha was buried also. These graves are the only shrines on the

way to Burkin, the third night-station of the caravan. The pilgrims trudge along as usual—some overtaking, others falling behind, all making new acquaintances, talking over Russia, recollecting together, reading their Bibles, and whispering children's hopes and fears about the rest of the journey to Galilee, resting beside springs or under cypress trees. Now and then as they walk a view opens, such as the valley of Esdraelon and the sea beyond, or Mount Hermon glistering with snow.

Already at Burkin Nazareth is near, only a day's march distant. It is generally a happy day among the hills. The pilgrims pass over the valley to the battlefield where Saul and Jonathan were killed by the Philistines. They see Mount Tabor, thought by many to be the height where Jesus was transfigured in the eyes of His disciples. They see also the last stones of Jezreel, the city of Ahab and Jezebel. Some pilgrims, instead of going direct to Nazareth, climb Tabor first, passing through Nain, where the widow's son was raised, and through Endor, where lived the witch who called forth Samuel's ghost. A little pathway leads up the slope of Tabor to the sacred summit. The mountain is covered with trees and shrubs, and in many places are the ruins of ancient houses and churches. It is an hour's climb to the church built over the place where the monks say Jesus actually stood when He was transfigured. Many ruins still stand on the crest of the hill, as if a fort had once been there

or a town with walls. The pilgrims pray in the church, and then repair to the Greek monastery hard by for tea. Those who are tired can sleep there, but there is little accommodation, and the journey is generally continued to Nazareth and the Russian hostelry there.

I should say the pilgrims are hospitably entertained all the way, and pay nothing for shelter at night, or indeed for the simple food they obtain at the monasteries. It is well that hospitality survives; no one is a loser thereby, even in a material way, for the peasant always remembers that the monks have to live somehow, and bearing that in mind he subscribes liberally for prayers.

The little town of Nazareth, with its ill-kept Church of the Annunciation, is perhaps a pitiful-looking shrine compared with that of Jerusalem, but the pilgrims do not regard mere material appearance.

"Not by these measures shall it be measured, not by these numbers shall it be counted, nor by these weights shall it be weighed, O Anathema," as God says to Human Reason in one of Andreef's mystery plays, "for measure there is not, no, nor number."

There is a whole tender world of religious life for the pilgrim to realise at Nazareth, for woman as for man: the mystery of the coming of the angel, the birth of the Child, the motherhood, the care of the mother, the growing of the Child, the young and beautiful life and the world about it; all

that by tradition and one's own personal imagination the little Christ-Child did; the father teaching the Child in the carpenter's shop, what it was to be such a father, the representative on earth of the ultimate Father, God. For all hearts Nazareth has its living story, and the pilgrims do not walk thither in vain.

The two or three days that they spend there are passed in different ways, and mean differently to different natures: the pausing by the Virgin's well, the kneeling in the sacred church, the kissing the house of Joseph and the places where Jesus walked and lived in the days when he saw visions and knew promises, but as yet stepped not consciously along the hard and narrow road to the cross. The peasants have simple minds and are not troubled by profitless doubts when the monks show pieces of the actual dress which the Virgin wore or planks which Jesus planed. The little child's soul in the peasant lisps, and marvels, and wonders, and is blessed.

II

THE LAKE OF GALILEE

THE Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society has control over the hostelry at Nazareth, and its provision is part of the Society's good work; it has also instituted schools for the boys and girls of the district, and has consequently a definite missionary influence. Russian is taught, there are Russian masters and mistresses, and a great number of the rising generation speak Russian as well as Syrian. It should be mentioned that one-third of the population belongs to the Holy Orthodox Church, either to the Russian branch of it or to the Greek.

For the pilgrims there is free medical aid at the Nazareth hostelry, and considerably more liberal hospitality in the matter of food than obtains in Jerusalem. But the peasant does not follow for the loaves and fishes.

Strange to say, there is little idea of resting at Nazareth. When the pilgrim has worshipped at the shrines of the little town he is eager to proceed to Galilee. The shore of the Sea of Galilee is most important. As Khitrof says in his exhortations to

pilgrims, "If in Jerusalem was consummated the Great Sacrifice whereby we were redeemed, if in Bethlehem for our sake the Child was born, if in Jordan we have seen Him baptized and been afeard, then we shouldn't forget that with the Lake of Tiberias is connected almost all the teaching activity of the Saviour. Here He pronounced great truths, here were accomplished most of His miracles, almost the whole gospel was fulfilled on the shores of the Sea of Galilee." The pilgrim does not forget it and is not likely to.

The lake, as all travellers to the Holy Land know, is delightful in the view of it from the slopes of Mount Tabor; it is the landscape of a beloved country, a country that might have been beloved in any century, and which was probably very dear to Jesus, though there is little to make one think so in the writing of the Gospel. Jesus' tendernesses to His mother are not recorded, as how could they be! We can only dimly imagine what the familiarity of the land meant to the Man Jesus who grew up in it.

The pilgrims come trooping over it now like real New Testament characters, every group of them like a picture of early Christians and disciples standing together, and they bring simple hearts. Simon Peter, before he was called to be a disciple, might almost be portrayed as a Russian peasant type. In my picture of Father Yevgeny discoursing there is a pilgrim listening who looks a regular St. Peter. Perhaps the peasants are conscious of the likeness,

or perhaps their faces and appearance are in a way a reflection of the faces and appearances in church paintings at home. In any case, the pilgrim has a lively interest in the shore where the first disciples were called; he feels that the men called were like himself. A pilgrim in the hostelry told me one morning a dream that seemed to me very touching; it was that Jesus had appeared to him in his native village away in Russia, and called him to be one of His disciples. Perhaps he really was called in his village, only not then, but when he set out to pilgrimage.

The peasants visit Cana, where the water was changed into wine—the mountain where the great Sermon was spoken—Gadara, where the man was cured by the devils passing into the swine—Capernaum, in ruins, where Peter's mother-in-law was healed—Magdala, where Jesus met Mary Magdalene —and many another little town and village on the populous shores of the lake.

There is a certain wistfulness in the peasant's actions, for instance, in their sitting in companies and eating bread at the place where the five thousand were fed, in their scattering fragments of bread specially brought from Jerusalem for the purpose and picking them up again, as if playing like children at the old miracle. It is enough to attract the attention of the Great Father had He even forgotten His children.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE CARAVAN AT THE MONASTERY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN THE DESERT.

III

A CALAMITOUS RETURN

THE way back from Nazareth and Galilee is generally harder than the journey out. The pilgrims are definitely committed to the road; they have often exhausted both their food-supply and the little money they think wise to take on their persons. Often there is the necessity to reach Jerusalem by Holy Week, and if bad weather sets in, the pilgrims prefer to brave rain or snow rather than wait in a village and be late for the great festivals of the Holy City.

There is, unfortunately, no literature of the pilgrimage, no collected stories and anecdotes, no novels on the subject. Russian culture has rather despised the peasant and the pilgrim. I have searched in vain the pages of modern Russian authors for stories of the pilgrims. I find nothing that is historically of the slightest value. No one of any literary ability seems to have ever journeyed with the pilgrims and brought a story home. It is strange that an immemorial national pilgrimage should have remained unsung. It shows how divorced is the interest of the Russian cultured

class from that which is essentially Russian. If we English had had this glorious emblem in our national life it would have been immortalised long ago.

Certainly, for a great Russian writer there is the outward form and visible expression of greatness lying potentially in the pilgrimage. There is the possibility of a great national epic that would make Europe ring. Of course it needs a Russian to write it—one can write a national epic only for one's own nation.

What matter there is in the story of the individual pilgrim, in the story of the caravan, of the crowd upon the pilgrim boat, or the congregation at the Sepulchre!

I take a story, now quickly growing legendary, of the calamities that overwhelmed the Annunciation caravan that set out for Nazareth in March just twenty years ago. It seems to have been the most adventurous and terrible journey in recent annals of the pilgrimage. I have pieced my story together from what an old pilgrim told me who was himself on that journey, and from what I have found in the printed records. It is a story of the pilgrim's cross.

The caravan left Jerusalem on the 4th of March 1893, in warm and clear weather. It was formed of five hundred and thirty-one women and two hundred and thirty-three men, most of whom were aged people, wasted by the strict fast, going on foot the whole of the fortnight's journey in accordance

with the pilgrim custom. The caravan was accompanied by the feldscher Ivanof, a monk of the mission of Father Gennady, a sick-nurse from the hospital, the Montenegrin policeman Nikolai Bykovitch, a negro, Dmitri, who spoke Russian well and had been hired temporarily by the Society, the retired Turkish gendarme Jogar, and two other gendarmes ordered to accompany the caravan by the Governor of Jerusalem. In the train of the caravan were thirty-eight saddled mules to carry such of the folk as should break down.

The caravan accomplished the out-journey to Nazareth without mischance. The weather was so warm that at Nablous, by the well where Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman, all slept in the open field under the stars. Soon afterwards, however, there was a change in the weather, and the caravan left Nazareth for Tabor in a thick mist. The mist was cleared by a fresh wind, and changed to a drizzling rain, which continued for some days. At Tabor it was decided to give up the journey to the Sea of Galilee and return by the direct road to Jerusalem. But only a hundred pilgrims would agree to this. These left the main body and marched home; the weather was wet and they had a heavy tramp, but they reached Jerusalem safely; the remainder stayed at Tabor and indicated their determination to go on to Tiberias.

The morning of the 11th of March broke rainy and windy. The weather was very chill. At eight

o'clock, however, the sun came out and the caravan moved forward. There was perhaps an hour's deceptive sunshine, and for the time being the weather was very hot. The pilgrims whose clothes were wet were glad to get dry, and were becoming very cheerful, when suddenly the sun disappeared behind a bank of cloud almost as unexpectedly as an hour before it had broken out. A high wind came across the mountains with spots of rain; the spots gave way to torrents, and then for two hours there came such a storm of rain and hail as the pilgrims can seldom have seen in their lives. The torrents were blinding; the caravan came to a standstill, and the people were all shelterless. There was not even a cave to hide in. As for the road, the mud was so deep that even the asses couldn't walk on it, and they were left behind in the charge of the muleteers. The exhausted pilgrims reached Tiberias about six in the evening, and were accommodated in the miserable Greek and Russian hostelries there, all wet, cold, shivering, and without even the most ordinary comforts of life. Here the leader of the caravan informed the pilgrims that he should await a change of weather before going further. So, for two whole days and nights, the rain never stopping, the caravan remained at Tiberias, that miserable empty collection of Arab huts and ruins. Many of the pilgrims then asked that they might be reconducted to Nazareth; no doubt several set off on their own account without

waiting for the main body. Some pilgrims still wished to go on to the shrines of Galilee, but they were over-ruled, and the whole party set off once more with sprawling mules and slipping feet to Nazareth. The rain had ceased, and the caravan made the journey without misadventure. At Nazareth they waited some while, but on the morning of 17th March decided to begin the journey back to Jerusalem.

The return was commenced in complete disorder. Near the village Khuvar a great gale sprang up, blowing in the faces of the pilgrims, the sky filled with leaden-coloured clouds in which every minute the white lightning flickered. The storm came up, darkening the day, the road was swept by blinding lightning, accompanied by the most appalling detonations of thunder. What the pilgrims felt, especially the women, who believe literally that the thunder is the voice of God, must be left to the imagination. From all the mountains around, the echoes grumbled, the lightning darted from all imaginable quarters, and the great leaden-coloured cumuli oppressed the air with their weight and the senses with their darkness. The caravan was filled with terror. Most of the pilgrims stopped of their own accord and prostrated themselves on the hill-side, and even whilst they did so, after one final overwhelming explosion of the thunder, the clouds opened and discharged themselves in torrential rain.

Down rushed the rain impetuous.

Stinging through the rain came large hailstones. On all the landscape there was not shelter for a cat. That was the least of the matter, however. In less time than it is written rivulets were born in the hills and they quickly became rivers; the road itself became a running stream, and the pilgrims stood up to the knee and even up to the waist in water. Imagine seven hundred English old-age pensioners in such a plight, and you have a notion of the age and frailty of the peasants, but add to that that they were all worn out with fasting, tired out with tramping, and had cold in their bones from the soaking at Tiberias.

Many fainted, many fell down in the water; some were rescued, some drowned. The caravan was, of course, at a standstill, and all who had strength to help gave their succour to the feeble, handing round vodka and cognac, and placing whom they could upon the asses, strapping on the fainting and the bodies of those who were dead. Those who retained consciousness sang hymns and crossed themselves continuously.

At length, the storm passing and the water subsiding, the caravan moved forward over the slippery mud, and it gained the little village of el-Lubban. The weather had become extremely cold and wintry, snow and sleet were falling, and the wind pierced to the bone. Bonfires were lighted in the Arab village. The children of the village and the stronger pilgrims gathered the wood and built the fires, and the others,

soaked and shivering, or moaning and dying, were placed around the cheerful blaze. Hot milk and cognac were served to all, and every effort was made to restore the failing. Many died. They gave up their souls to God and were glad. There had been terror in the moment of the storm, but now peace was attained and none of the pilgrims felt any fear. To them the experience was very strange and wonderful; they invested it with a personal religious significance. God had a special reason for sending the storm and calling so many of their brothers and sisters to Him. Perhaps all over the world at that moment just as strange things were happening. That day was a particular one, not only in the life of each individual pilgrim, but in the life of every man in the world, for God was walking in the heavens. The bodies of the dead pilgrims were laid out in a shed and over them candles were lit, the living pilgrims never ceasing to watch and to sing.

Those officially in charge of the caravan must have felt the burden of their responsibility very heavy. There was no telegraph, no means of communication with Jerusalem. They could do nothing but attend to the sick, and hurry forward as quickly as possible. El-Lubban was a miserable village, and it was decided to move the caravan on to the neighbouring settlement of Sindzhil, which afforded better accommodation. Sindzhil was not far away; those who had not broken down would not find the journey too much for them, and the sick

and the dead could be brought on the asses and in the village carts. But this project was defeated by the Arab muleteers, who blankly refused to allow their animals to go. Turkey is comparatively a free country, as there is no power to be brought to bear effectively on its people: if a muleteer proves cantankerous there is nothing to be done. In Russia the official in charge of such an expedition would have had these muleteers arrested very quickly. Palestine, however, is not subject to the all-seeing double-headed eagle, and the muleteers saved their mules and sacrificed the pilgrims. The sick and the dead were left behind at el-Lubban, and those who could walk set out for Sindzhil with the feldscher.

As they didn't know the way and it was evening, these were nearly overtaken by calamity once more. As evidence of the disorganised state of the party, they actually found one poor old pilgrim woman on the road who had never reached el-Lubban with the rest, and when they all reached Sindzhil they found forty-four pilgrims there already, a party that had been lost in the storm and had gone on by itself. From this village the feldscher sent the Turkish gendarme Jogar to Jerusalem with news of the plight of the caravan.

Long before the news reached Jerusalem however, there was anxiety and even consternation there. The pilgrims had long been expected, and as from the eleventh to the eighteenth of March it snowed or rained without intermission, it was felt that the

weather on the mountainous road from Nazareth must be very bad. There were all manner of rumours in the hostelry, the most persistent being that the caravan had been completely buried and frozen in a snowstorm. Even before the gendarme Jogar arrived the Palestine Society had sent out aid. The two Montenegrins, Lazar Ban and Ivan Kniazhevitch were despatched with money, and with an order to spare nothing to bring the people safely home. Fortunately money has more power to persuade an Arab than any other argument. The muleteers under its influence allowed the mules to go out to work again and carry the sick and the dead. There were not, however, sufficient mules to be found, so that Lazar Ban sent to Jerusalem for forty more.

At this point it may well be mentioned that there was now no caravan at all, but instead, a series of straggling parties all along the road from Nazareth to Jerusalem. All idea of order was gone. There was no main party, there were no real headquarters, pilgrims fell by the roadside and died; many bodies were found afterwards with knife wounds, showing that in their enfeebled state they had been attacked by the natives and robbed, many bodies never were found. Horses and mules, carts of bread and wine and medicines were sent from headquarters, for as the news of the extent of the calamity came through, the interest of all people at Jerusalem was aroused. Though the weather remained wet and dreary, many

went out of the Holy City to Ramalla to meet the pilgrims, and they met hundreds of men and women on the road, worn-out, bedraggled, and speechless. The strange thing was that when the mules were brought, many of the pilgrims refused to take the proffered aid, though they had to walk at the rate of but half a mile an hour up to the ankle in slimy mud; they refused to ride on the mules, saying that it was necessary to suffer, and that nothing would persuade them to ride where Jesus had walked.

At Ramalla was a terrible state of affairs. In one shelter lay a hundred women and ten men who had fallen by the way. A priest tells of the Greek hostelry where in a stone cell forty women sat about a bonfire made of wet wood and kerosine, and the room was full of suffocating white smoke. In the village church lay a long line of dead bodies waiting for burial. Here one evening the burial service was taken for twenty-five simultaneously, an occasion unforgettable for all those who were present. The pilgrims held candles and sang with quavering voices, and kissed the dead faces with terrible emotion.

Help for the pilgrims was concentrated at Ramalla, where were sent several hundred pounds of bread, clean linen for a hundred people, and an extraordinary amount of medicine and wine. The caravan was re-formed as the stragglers came in, and at length several hundreds were formed into a procession and brought to Jerusalem. They came, not with palms nor with olive branches, neither with

A PILGRIM WOMAN WHO DIED ON THE WAY HOME FROM JORDAN.

hymns nor with cries, but with pale, silent faces and tottering limbs. Crowds went out from Jerusalem to meet them and give a hearty welcome; but the pilgrims, living, not in the sight of men but in the sight of God, fell down upon their knees as the walls of the City came into vision, and cried out, "Thanks be to Thee, O Lord, who hast brought us once more to see Thy Holy City, and has not left us to perish in the wilderness. Thanks be to Thee who hast saved our bodies from the wild beasts and the birds!"

IV

THE JOYFUL RETURN

THIS was the return of twenty years ago, but it is not to be thought that there has been such sorrow on many occasions. The return to Jerusalem is generally one of great gladness, of songs and triumph. Nowadays the caravan is a larger one, generally exceeding fifteen hundred in number, and the entry into the Holy City is made in grand style.

Greater precautions are now taken by the Palestine Society to save the weak; those in charge have more power to spend money; there are more saddled asses. Two days before the arrival in Jerusalem, a consignment of bread is sent out to meet the caravan, and a pound of bread is given to each pilgrim. The bread is received with gladness, even with tears; not that the majority of pilgrims are in need of a pound of bread, but that they are touched by the care of Jerusalem for them.

On the day after coming home from Jordan, I went out with a party of pilgrims to meet the caravan at the Mount of Olives. It was a glorious morning, one of many perfectly sunny days, and it

was very pleasant sitting on rocks among the wild flowers at the side of the road waiting with hundreds of others for the arrival.

Only the pilgrims and the beggars knew that the caravan was expected. The European and American tourists who saw the spectacle by chance seem to have been generally of opinion that the pilgrims thus coming in were just arriving from Russia, having walked all the way. The impression of the entry is so grand that one might well believe that it was the crown of the long pilgrimage, the coming in of those who had just reached Jerusalem after three or four thousand miles journeying on foot.

About this time, that is, just before Holy Week, Jerusalem began to swarm with beggars and to have triple and quadruple its usual number, attracted from all districts round by the rich concourse of Easter. Now they began to show themselves in force; and truly their number, ugliness, and diversity were appalling as we saw them drawn up to plunge upon the joyous pilgrims and get money from them in the first emotional burst of the arrival at Jerusalem.

Already they began to cry :—

"*Baksheesh, baksheesh!*"

"*Pa-pa, ma-ma, niet.*" ("No papa, no mamma.")

"*Spree-ezd Nazaret, spree-ezd Nazaret.*" ("Welcome from Nazareth.")

The crippled crawled in the dust, the diseased displayed their sores, the ragged their rents. The road was filled with all the loathsome beggary of

the East. When the advance-guard of the caravan appeared at a corner of the road the beggars fairly lost their heads.

"Welcome to Jerusalem! Welcome, brothers! *Spree-ezdom, Spree-ezdom!*" cry the pilgrims who are waiting, and they run towards the happy faces of the throng. Here they come, all carrying olive branches and palms, here are the Montenegrin policemen, the mounted Turkish gendarme, pilgrims on asses, pilgrims in carts, pilgrims under immense broad black umbrellas, phalanxes on foot, dust all over, pack on back, *lapti* on the feet, staff in hand, and radiantly smiling. Jerusalem once more! Jerusalem all bedecked for Holy Week with a glorious sun shining over it, and the crown of the pilgrimage at hand! The pilgrims embrace and kiss one another; they fall down on their knees and give thanks; they rise and kiss again.

But onward! The line of the caravan must not be broken. It is but a Sabbath day's journey to the hostelry. The beggars cry plaintively, whine, shriek, fall down in the way, and the pilgrims empty from their sacks all their crusts and waste ends to them. We who have gone out to meet them march by the side, and we bring them triumphantly to the Russian settlement. Here once more a crowd is waiting to meet them, the happy demonstrations are repeated. But without much delay the whole party is brought into the gardens, and it sits down to many tables where Jerusalem gives a free dinner

THE PILGRIMS ARRIVE WITHIN SIGHT OF THE HOLY CITY.

to all, thanking God before and after for all His mercies.

In the dormitories and the pavilions there is not an empty place this day. And Abraham, the mysterious pilgrim, has specially sanctified all the pigeon-hole beds, making the sign of the cross in incense over them one by one. Jerusalem now holds its full complement of pilgrims.

VI

HOLY WEEK.

I

THE APPROACH OF HOLY WEEK

JERUSALEM began to overflow with pilgrims and sightseers, and also with mountebanks, showmen and hawkers, and all the parasites of the legitimate crowd. Christianity in all the garishness and diversity of its Eastern adherence flaunted the eye. The ordinarily dressed European and American whom one is led to regard as the Christian type is in a minority at the Holy City. The speculative looking English rector, the mild and self-contained Catholic, the hotel-loads of commercial heathen, or cousins and dependants of these heathen, form but a sober and unarresting unit of the Jerusalem pageant. The Holy City is delivered into the hands of the Russians, the Armenians, the Bulgarians, and the Christian Arabs and Syrians. But beyond these there are great numbers of Greeks, Albanians, Soudanese, there are Indian converts, negroes, and indeed representatives of almost every race of the world, all hustling and crowding one another in the narrow Jerusalem streets.

With the coming on of Holy Week the pilgrim

enters upon the final phase of this service of his to God. From the Saturday before Palm Sunday to the morning of Easter he lives the most arduous and glowing life that can be imagined. Religious fire fuses his whole being so that he becomes one flame, like a lamp burning before the Holy of Holies. All day and all night life becomes a continuous church service and ecclesiastical pageant. The Jerusalem churches, and especially that of the Sepulchre, are crowded from morning till night; one great service and procession follows another all day long. In the numerous chapels and dim galleries of St. Sepulchre the sweet singing never dies away.

In my experience I never saw such devotion as that of the Russian peasants this last week of the great fast this year. Worn out already by tramping and by fasting, to say nothing of the effect of such exciting life on their hitherto quiet age, they were yet ready to spend themselves to the last limit of life and care, sacrificing food, sleep, and the most elementary comforts of existence in order to live the pilgrimage out to the glorious end.

How many died these last days!

In the hospital, as soon as Holy Week came near, there was the utmost feverishness among the patients. They found themselves virtual prisoners —prisoners for their own sake. But they felt they would rather die in the streets than lie in their beds gathering vulgar health when such doings were toward in the city.

I met one of the doctors one day—it seems he had been having a lively time, being alternately coaxed and abused by all his patients in turn.

"Here's a rouble for you," said one old querulous pilgrim. "Just stir yourself a little now and get me right."

"Write that I may get up now," was the general cry.

"You're not in a fit state," would be the reply.

"A fit state, a fit state! What does it matter to us or to God whether our bodies are well. Write, write, write. God'll pardon you for saying we are well."

I heard a pathetic tale at Easter how a poor, broken-down old dame, who had been incarcerated all through Holy Week and its glories, brought out a hot shilling which she had been nursing under the bedclothes all through the night of Good Friday, and she offered it to the doctor with a whisper—

"I won't say anything, take that and write that I am well, and let me go out."

Yet the doctor refused.

To add to the asceticism of the pilgrims' lives, they began now to examine themselves and curtail even their fast diet so as to be in a condition to receive Holy Communion on the night of Holy Thursday. Prayers and religious exercises seemed to be doubled in the hostelries, and even at two in the morning there was the continual drone of prayers, and the thumpings of old knees going down upon the wooden couches.

If the laity were preparing, the clergy were not doing less. On the Friday before Palm Sunday, *i.e.*, on the day after the return from Jordan, the Church of the Life-giving Grave was closed to the pilgrims. In preparation for Passion Week the Sepulchre had to be washed and adorned. Those of us who visited the square of the church saw the Arabs and lay brethren swilling and mopping warm water over the stone floors, taking down old lamps and putting up new, erecting places of vantage, and stands for European and American sightseers. Many things were happening within the temple. About a thousand new lamps were hung; the ordinary ikons were taken away and replaced by representations of the Passion of our Lord, pictures embroidered on gold and violet coloured velvets. The Ark of the Sepulchre itself was also hung with precious embroideries in which pictures were made with pearls and rubies, and adorned with flowers. The interior of the Ark, the Holy of Holies, was carefully tended, scented with rose odours, and decked with new-picked flowers. At the entrance to the Ark was hung from the darkness of the vault the precious five-wick lamp sent to the Tomb by the Emperor Nicholas I. Then also on the altar the priests placed precious cloths and silver candlesticks. Above the great throne of the altar of Golgotha were hung lamps, and from the lamps lovely garlands. All along the ikonostasis new shapely candles were erected, candles as tall as

the priests themselves, some of them great white cylinders of wax. All day the long-haired monks and priests moved to and fro in stately garb, working with their white, ringed fingers. One knew they were preparing for the strange sacrifice, the offering of the embodiment of life's loveliness unto death. It seemed that somewhere in the background the young and lovely One Himself was in durance, and that it was the priests themselves who would sacrifice Him. It was on this day that I read in St. John how the priest Caiaphas prophesied in spite of himself, and became in a strange way changed from the vulgar persecutor to the predestined hierophant of the mystery—"Consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. This spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation" (St. John xi. 50, 51).

What scandal, too, was talked about the priests and their ways by new-come sightseers and free-thinkers. How frequently the pilgrims were called upon by revolutionary propagandists to desert their religion because the priests were in a great conspiracy to exploit them, because the priests themselves lived evil lives, and even smoked and drank in the Holy Places. There was comfort in the thought that the priests themselves were like Caiaphas of old, made holy by destiny. What mattered at Jerusalem was the rite, the sacrifice, the Jesus crucified in

mystery in each man's heart. Indeed, had the priests been tender and gentle as the victim Himself they had never had the heart to carry through even the rite, and even in symbolism to crucify Him over again.

I told this to Father Yevgeny, but being himself a monk he did not enter into the thought as readily as other pilgrims. "But the populace also was guilty," he cried out in his raucous voice, "they participated in the guilt, for they cried out for Barabbas. It was not only the chief priest and the scribes, but you and I, and all of us. Even St. Peter was afraid."

"But there was St. Joseph," said I, "of Arimathea, and the Maries and St. John, and many who watched from afar with fear and trembling in their hearts, many also who like us had come to Jerusalem from afar."

Yevgeny agreed. We even promised to remember through Holy Week, when we came back from the solemnization of the raising of Lazarus, that "from that day forth the priests took counsel together to put him to death."

IN THE SEPULCHRE.

Only Christians need remove their hats.

A SERVICE FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE DEAD.

Koutia, Communion Loaves, and Lighted Tapers.

II

VERBA AND PALM SUNDAY

I WENT out with 4500 pilgrims on the Friday evening before Palm Sunday, some of us to sleep at the Monastery of the righteous Lazarus, others to spend the night in the Virgin's tomb, others to be shut in the Garden of Gethsemane, and many simply to lie and sleep under the open face of heaven a mile or so outside the city on the road toward Bethany. I took my chance with the last named.

It is a beautiful district wherein to spend the night—between the Mount of Olives and Bethany. The great grey rocks climb in gallery after gallery to the sky; whilst it is evening they breathe the language of mystery, and when night cloaks them they become the walls of a gigantic, dark, and awe-inspiring temple. As we lay, so far below the summits of the rocks, we looked up at the lambent roof of the sky alight with the yellow flames of stars.

We slept, most of us, very well, but the night was surprisingly cold; one pilgrim gathered wood and made a small fire, which, when I wakened now

and then, I saw flickering poorly—the wild places of the Holy Land do not abound in dry wood as Russia does. Before dawn we got up; some went to the Lazarevsky Monastery to get tea, and others climbed the Mount of Olives to join in the early service at the Church of the Ascension. Liubomudrof and I went to the grave of Lazarus, a cave with a sharp descent of twenty-four steps at the bottom of which is a Roman Catholic altar. We kissed the place where Lazarus stood up in the grave-garments, and then hurried out to the church of the meeting of Martha with Jesus, and we did reverence to the chair where Jesus sat whilst he waited some minutes for Mary. A service was being rendered in the little church, and the peasants swarmed about it like bees. As the sun came up into the sky and morning was realised, crowds of new pilgrims appeared coming from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. The road was thronged with mouzhiks and *babas* walking in parade as on "festival day" in a large Russian village. As Liubomudrof remarked, it was as if the village church at Bethany were celebrating its dedication day, and the people had come from all the villages round about for a *gulanie.*

For most of us it was a gala day, not one of arduous prayer and tramping, but of rest and happiness. We talked gaily to all and sundry whom we met, strayed over the fields picking Jacob's ladders and poppies, and breaking branches from the olive

trees. Many of us bought palms from the Arab hawkers. In the afternoon we purposed to enter Jerusalem with flowers and palms as the populace does at Moscow and Kief on Palm Saturday, bringing once more Jesus to Jerusalem.

On our way back we called at Bithsphania, where the apostles took the ass's colt, and we came strewing petals of wild flowers and carrying our olive branches to the Holy City once again. Those who had not obtained date palms, and who preferred them to the simple olive branches, hastened to buy them at Jerusalem, in order that they might take them to the great service in the evening and bear them in triumph on the morrow. Formerly the clergy distributed palms among the pilgrims gratis, but the good custom has been allowed to lapse and the commercial Arab has stepped in.

For my part I went from church to church in Jerusalem, starting at the Troitsky Cathedral outside the hostelry, and finishing with the Church of the Life-giving Grave, and I lived a moment in each. Every one of the sacred buildings was filled with peasant humanity, and above the heads of the close-packed crowd the palms waved like a maize-field.

The service at the Life-giving Grave was magnificent. It was taken by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, several bishops, and many monks, all the clergy in gorgeous vestments. The new crystal lamps were lit, and innumerable wax candles; the black depth of the church was agleam with lights

like a starlit sky brought down from heaven. The singing was glorious.

Again next morning, Palm Sunday, the pageant at the Sepulchre was glorious, and those who penetrated to the fore of the terrible crowd of pilgrims, sight-seers, and Turkish soldiers, saw wondrous sights—many clergy in rich robes holding in their hands, some boxes of relics, others little bright-painted ikons; they saw bishops in their copes carrying Gospels, priests holding bouquets of flowers, surpliced boys with lighted candles, many with waving palms, strange, pale-faced, lank-haired monks with stove-pipe hats on their heads, and in their hands the poles of painted banners and gilt crosses. One priest held an immense olive branch, say rather an olive tree, all hung with flowers and ornaments like a different sort of Christmas tree. With a great blast of singing and with much hustling by the Turkish soldiers keeping the worshippers back, the great procession commenced its threefold march round the Sacred Grave. Not only the choir, but all the pilgrims took up the hymn, and even those in the surging mob without. The Patriarch then read in a loud voice the prayer for the Christian kings and for the Sultan—the Sultan won't be left out. Then he led the way to that part of the church dedicated to the Resurrection, and standing at his throne distributed the sacred bread.

The church was crushed to such an extent that many lost their feet, and were borne up on other

people's sides and shoulders. Every available eminence was occupied, if not by peasants at least by Arabs, and the rough soldiery dealt with the crowd menacingly. The great olive branch which in old times the clergy, the Patriarch, and even emperors and kings, went out to hew at Bethany was now to be cut into bits in the church and distributed to the faithful. Lucky they who managed to get a leaf to take home to Mother Russia.

Towards the end of the service and before the distribution of the leaves, I sought a seat in one of the grand structures put up by the monks, facing the entrance to the Sepulchre, and there watched the end. Nominally the seats are free, but a handsome *baksheesh* is taken from the tourist who, of course, manages his business through an interpreter. Several Russian peasants had climbed up and taken seats, no one saying them nay. I sat next to a young lady from America; she had her brother with her, but he sat behind. They carried on a very audible conversation. She sat in front in order to take a snapshot when the people came out of church. Her brother, who was a self-professed specialist in nationality, and could tell what each pilgrim was by a glance at his face, was not at all abashed to call me "some sort of a Russian, but d—n tall." The girl had a pack of letters which she opened and re-read one by one. They were evidently congratulations as, by a glimpse I had of one, she had lately become engaged.

Presently, with much shrieking and skirling from the Orthodox Arabs, who kept crying out in religious frenzy, "There is no God but God, the God of the Orthodox Christians," etc., the dark cavern-door of the Tomb began to vomit forth its dense crowds of worshippers. The service was over. Out came the huge olive branch. The clergy had not succeeded in dividing it up, but one worshipper had snatched it and borne it away himself. He carried it high above his head and shouted; the other pilgrims cried with him, and many tried to snatch twigs and leaves. Then suddenly a little band of red-capped Turks and be-turbaned Moslems made a loud whoop and struck their way with blows through the amazed crowd of worshippers, threw themselves on the bearer of the olive branch and gained possession of the trophy. No one could stand against them. The soldiers cried out, and we thought they would fire as they did one year previously, but the Mussulmans achieved the desperate deed, broke the branch to bits among themselves, and ran off as quickly as they had come, shrieking triumphantly. The American girl snapped her kodak.

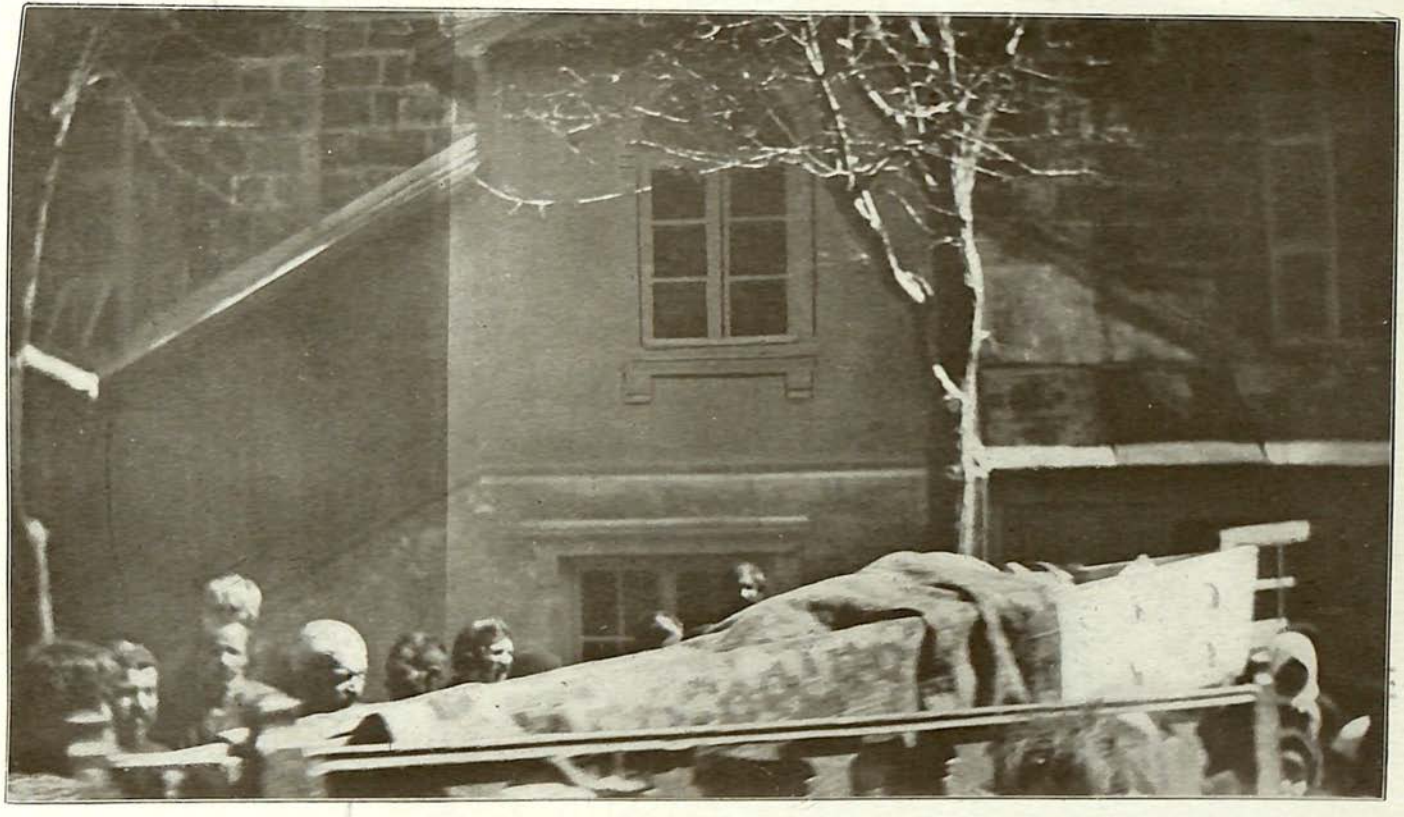
The little scene was over in a twinkling. The Christian Arabs swore vengeance, the mild Russians spoke to one another indignantly, but the crowd, still surging forth of the gate of the Sepulchre, soon moved all would-be demonstrators on. I came down from the stand and joined the Russians who

went down to the Golden Gate, that gate through which it is prophesied that a great conqueror shall enter Jerusalem, perhaps Jesus coming a second time. The gate is that through which Jesus came when he entered in triumph long ago. It is now mortared up by the superstitious Turks who fear the fulfilment of the prophecy.

Every day during this last period of Lent there were funerals of pilgrims, and this Palm Sunday in the afternoon I witnessed the committing of two old peasants to their rest in earth. I had returned from the Golden Gate to the hostelry, and had hardly made my dinner—a better one than usual, for fish was allowed that day—when a young monk came and told me that the two dead ones were being brought to the church. Already in the little church of the monastery a great number of pilgrims were gathered round about two simple plank coffins standing on deal trestles in the nave. The coffins were very shallow, only just permitting the lid to fasten down. At Sion, where the pilgrims are buried, it is too much labour to hew out a sepulchre for a large coffin. I came in close with the monk and beheld the dead, for the faces were uncovered. Both pilgrims looked extraordinarily grand in death; on their heads were black mitre-shaped caps with white tinsel crosses above the brows, round about the brows were bound ribbons on which prayers were embroidered or printed, their lips were thick and long and dull under the now

statuesque moustache, their sunburnt faces had a look of exaltation even, one might say, of madness. They had both died suddenly, had both been to Nazareth and back living on crusts of black bread, had both been to Bethany the day before, and gathered flowers and olive branches. Their own flowers were strewn in the coffins with them. They were dressed in their Jordan-dipped shrouds, crosses were in their hands and palms on their breasts. We all stood around and stared, the dead all encompassed by the living. Presently, as was fitting, candles were distributed, and we lit from one another, all bowing toward one another in the dim church, and the service commenced. The prayers were soon said and the candles extinguished, and then one by one, or rather two or three by two or three, the pilgrims came up to the coffins, bent down and kissed the inanimate faces, and said farewell. We all crossed ourselves and sighed; some shed tears, others said words of praise. All felt it was well for the pilgrims to have died in the Holy Land in the holiest days of their life. There was no thought that it was far away to die. It was a great blessing. Many pilgrims reflected how good it would be for these on the day of the Resurrection.

"And you know," said one peasant to me, "here bodies don't corrupt. It's not as in Russia, where your face is all gone in a very short time; here there is holiness in the land, and that keeps the bodies long after the processes of Nature are due."



THE DEAD PILGRIM CARRIED ON THE PEASANTS' HEADS ON PALM SUNDAY.

With what sounding kisses the peasant women took leave of the dead ones and promised to meet them in heaven! I am sure every pilgrim in the church came up and gave the parting kiss. And there was a strange fascination in the faces of the dead. All the time the service was in process they seemed to say mysteriously, "Come, come, come and die, come and die."

At last the final blessing was given, and several of the living pilgrims lifted the coffins on to their heads and bore them out of the church. All the rest of us followed with hymns, and we bore them away through the Jerusalem streets and found them sepulchres in Sion.

III

ABRAHAM: THE ETERNAL PILGRIM

ONE of the most remarkable figures of the pilgrimage was Abraham, seventy-five years old, at Jerusalem for the twentieth time. The old greybeard beggar pilgrim with wrinkled brows and opaque spectacles was one of the sights of the hostelry. He was commonly to be seen standing with head and shoulders thrown back, as erect as a ship's captain scanning the sea, a great wallet hanging from his shoulders, and in his hands a brass-bound, heavy pilgrim's staff. He was the most public person of us all, though quite unofficial. All manner of life centred round him in the hostelries. He was, more than the archimandrite who drove to and fro, the host of the pilgrims. He welcomed all newcomers as if they were his guests. The numbers whom he kissed and who chose or even wanted to be kissed by the old "half-saint" were amazing.

Abraham is Jerusalem's eternal pilgrim. His whole life is a pilgrimage now, pilgrimage after pilgrimage. He has no money or food or clothing but what other people give him, and yet he manages

each year to reach the Holy City. For nine months of the year he is tramping in Russia, and for the other three he is in the Holy Land or on the pilgrim boat. His life is a denial in itself of all the modern conception of how one should spend one's days. From the common point of view Abraham and his like are dead waste, they are doing nothing, they are living on those who work, and contributing nothing to the general store. But Abraham is not only taking, but giving. For all those who have helped him on the way to Jerusalem he prays when he reaches the city. Not only that, but he has hundreds of commissions for prayers and a goodly quantity of money to give to the monks and the priests in the names of peasants whom he has met on his pilgrimage, and who have asked him to pay for prayers for the health of the living and the peace of soul of the dead.

A touching story is told of Abraham. When he was a little boy his ears were filled with the tales of the pilgrims to whom his hospitable father gave shelter. At seven years old the little Abraham conceived the idea of starting for Jerusalem, and he began to save his crusts and put them by in a sack. One day, when he had a sackful, he started off without telling anyone, and toddled away up the road along which he had seen so many pilgrims going. Late in the evening, footsore and tired, he met an old waggoner standing outside an inn. "Where are you going?" asked the latter. "To Jerusalem,"

the boy replied faintly. "Then," said the waggoner, "you'd better come along with me. Get up into the waggon." The boy, nothing loth, climbed into the cart, lay down in the hay and fell fast asleep. And he did not wake for a long while. At last he was aware of someone shaking and poking him.

"Wake up, wake up," said a familiar voice.

"Where am I?" said the boy rubbing his eyes.

"At the Holy City of Jerusalem," said someone gruffly.

"Wha-at?" said the boy, "wha-at?" And looking round he saw his mother standing in the doorway. The waggoner had driven him home again.

From that day to this the peasant has had a pilgrim soul. He has visited all the shrines and is deep in all the holy lore. For the last thirty years he has done nothing but pilgrimage and "find other men's charity." He has been a holy beggar, and yet has not begged. Each night, when Abraham arrives at a village and seeks hospitality at a strange door, he does not cry out, "Here comes an old pilgrim who craves your Christian charity," etc. etc. He prefers to live in the atmosphere of Old Russia, where the refusal of shelter to a pilgrim is a more impossible discord than cursing in the Mass. Abraham stops outside the door, knocks three times with his brass-bound staff, and calls out in deep bass :—

"In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

How mysterious and wonderful the greeting is when you hear it from within when the ikon lamp is burning, the family is round the humming samovar, and outside is the dark night, and the unknown standing in it waiting at your door with face and aspect unimaginable. There is always a feeling it may be one of the ancient saints themselves still wandering the earth, not yet taken up into heaven. There is a pause, the family cross themselves, then the good man of the house says—

"Amen."

Abraham enters, the eternal pilgrim, with wrinkled brow, grey ancient locks, opaque purple spectacles, on his back the pack of sorrows, in his hand his antique brass-bound staff.

He comes in with stories and with blessing; there is the odour of incense in his garments and intelligence of Heaven in his features. He is the "bell of the Lord," the heavenly messenger going to and fro on the business which is beyond the grave. His presence under your roof is itself a blessing. In the morning he does not ask of you, he only receives. You give him money, bread, fruit perhaps, you give him a home-spun shroud to dip in the waters of Jordan for you, you entrust him to ask the priests at holy shrines to pray for you, you send him to Nazareth and Bethlehem, and Guerassim, and the Grave, and give him copecks to offer for the upkeep of the monasteries and churches where the

monks and priests are praying. Then the old pilgrim goes on his way once more.

Each year Abraham has received enough money to enable him to pay for his ticket to Jaffa on the pilgrim boat—he never spends money on food or lodging or clothes, so it is easy to save. From Jaffa he walks to Jerusalem. He makes the arduous pilgrimage to Jordan and Nazareth without turning a hair and fulfils all his commissions. He lives in the pilgrims' lives at the hostelry at Jerusalem, and is beloved of them, and then when Easter comes at last and the life of Jesus is fulfilled in symbol, he returns to Russia once more, laden with little tokens, —ikons, crosses, sacred pictures, bits of Jerusalem earth, bottles of Jordan water,—and he returns on his path to those who have helped him and sheltered him on the outward way. He distributes his blessings, and then at the turn of the year turns with it to face the Holy City once again.

Each morning in Holy Week before dawn there was a smell of incense in the hostelry. By the dim light of the paraffin lamp one saw the shadowy figure of the aged pilgrim shuffling from bench to bench, and carrying in his hand a home-made censer from which a white and luscious smoke was rising. Most of the other pilgrims slept, and old Abraham came to make a cross of incense in the air above each sleeper. It was a voluntary act—an act of grace, something delightful and tender. The pilgrim brought to birth in each of us, in the very

morning before the rising of the noise and clamour, a sense of the holiness of each of these last days of Christ's Passion.

But Abraham was open to all, familiarly; though he was mysterious he was by no means recluse. He was fond of addressing endless questions to pilgrims, his one comment on the answers being *Slava Tebye Gospody!* (Glory be to Thee, O Lord!) or more commonly *Spasebo Tebye Gospody!* (Thanks be to Thee, O Lord!) He assailed me thus one morning:—

"What is your name?"

"Stefan," I replied.

"*Spasebo Tebye Gospody!*" he rejoined, crossing himself. "Which Stefan? When do you keep the day of your angel?"

"The first martyr; the 26th December."

"*Spasebo Tebye Gospody!*" (crossing himself). "How old are you?"

"Twenty-eight."

"*Spasebo Tebye Gospody!*" (crossing himself). "From what province do you come?"

"From the Don Cossacks."

"*Spasebo Tebye Gospody!*" (crossing himself) and so on, asking if it were the first time to Jerusalem, where I had prayed, whether I had been to Jordan, and many other things, always thanking God and crossing himself, so that we seemed to be going through a sort of litany. He did not thank God because I answered, but because of the holy

fact contained in my answer. To him each little thing in life was part of God's wonderful providence. That was the experience of the old pilgrim.

There was a little bath-house in the hostelry yard where twenty-five pilgrims at a time had hot baths, the men and women going in in alternate relays. Unless one got there very early it was necessary to wait hours — not that the pilgrims minded. This bath-house was a favourite haunt of Abraham, who not only sat and talked with the mouzhiks, but also with the *babas* with whom he was a great favourite.

One morning I met a Siberian woman, a midwife who had come ostensibly on a pilgrimage, but in reality to see if there might not be scope for her in her profession at Jerusalem. She told me of Abraham indignantly. She had been to the bath, and was horrified to see the old man in the room talking and singing with the peasant women; she flatly refused to undress whilst he remained. She, however, found herself in a minority; Abraham was a half-saint, and no *baba* objected to him.

The old pilgrim was especially beloved by the peasant women. They continually brought him copecks and food, so that he could not possibly have wanted for anything. He for his part was never happier than when he gathered a crowd of them about him, and conducted a little service of hymn-singing with them. He might commonly be seen in the hostelry yard with a score or so of

ABRAHAM, THE ETERNAL PILGRIM, BURNING INCENSE IN THE HOSTELRY AT DAWN.

babas young and old about him. He stood in the middle and recited the verse that he wanted them to sing, and then swaying his body to and fro, and keeping time with his two arms, the one that was empty and the one that held the brass-bound staff, he would lead the tune in an ancient, sloppy, grandmother's voice, while all the women joined in unison. I watched him one evening hold such a service for a whole hour. When he decided to stop he took from his pocket a bottle of scented water, and then blessed each pilgrim woman in turn. He bade her cross herself, examined the way she held her fingers, and if she had lapsed into unorthodox habits, and did not, in his opinion, cross herself rightly, he corrected her. Then he made the sign of the cross on the top of her head very deliberately, tapping with his old fingers the crown and the brow and the temple. That done he filled his mouth with scented holy water and spurted it forth again into the peasant woman's face and then kissed her cheeks all trickling with water. This he did all the way round, and even by request twice and thrice over again. The old women brought him farthings.

I heard an onlooker say, "There isn't his like in Jerusalem, no, not even in Russia, not even in the world. He does for love what the priests should do through duty. Who take the trouble to see that the *babas* held their fingers properly but such as he?"

I felt thrilled with agreement as I overheard that remark, but I would not have made it so myself. It is true that Abraham is wonderful, but it is no reproach to the priests. Wild flowers are more acceptable to God than the flowers of the garden, or to put it in another way, Nature is a greater gardener than man, and what is done in Abraham could scarcely be done in a priest.

IV

IN THE HOSTELRIES

ALL who had not been to Jordan already journeyed hurriedly thither on Monday of Holy Week, judging the baptism in the holy stream an indispensable preparation before receiving the sacrament and entering upon the mysteries of Easter. Many pilgrims also went to Duba on the plains of Mamri, where still lives the oak under which Abraham entertained the three angels manifesting the Trinity On the Wednesday I met my old man from Tobolsk Government, the one to whom I gave sixpence on the pilgrim-boat. He had just come back from Duba.

"A tremendous oak!" said he. "To think that it has lived all these thousands of years, and that my unworthy eyes should survive to see it!"

Other pilgrims went to Bethlehem, amongst them the boy from the Ural; he had five roubles from people in his village to give to the monks there. Altogether there was an immense amount of going in and out, and the city of Jerusalem was like an ant heap swarming with ants.

Yevgeny and I went to the cave of St. Pelagia once more, and the spot on which Jesus is supposed to have stood when he taught the disciples the Lord's Prayer. It was here that the apostles set up the first cross that was used as a symbol of the Christian religion.

"How many millions of crosses have been made since then," said Yevgeny, "crosses of wood, crosses of stone, crosses of metal, crosses of spirit, the crosses which you make with your hand!"

The old man removed his hat and made the sign of the cross over his black-robed chest.

Dear old Dyadya went with others and lived a night in the tomb of the Virgin. Hundreds of lamps were burning in the dark cave-temple. "It was so sweet and comforting that I felt just as if she had covered me with her sacred veil,' said the gentle pilgrim.

Philip I found to be taking batches of peasant women to booths opposite the Armenian Monastery of St. James, there to be tattooed on the arm by nimble Arab craftsmen sitting on three-leg stools and jabbing the bare flesh of clients with their tattooing needles. Here figures of the Saviour were worked on the arm, also figures of the Mother and Child, of Nicholas the wonder-worker, and other favourite saints. Besides the little pictures most pilgrims had the word Jerusalem printed, and the year 1912, and some ornamentation of flowers. The process was quickly accomplished considering the art

AT THE OAK WHERE THE PATRIARCH ABRAHAM IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE ENTERTAINED THE HOLY TRINITY.

According to the pilgrims, the same oak.

in the work, but all the same it was slower and more painful than being vaccinated. One girl of seventeen wept bitterly all the while the operation was proceeding. When the pricking was done the Arabs covered up the places with black plaster, and their victims were released with great black patches on their arms. In a day they might take off the plaster and they would find the picture fixed beneath. The Arabs took a shilling a time, and Philip his commission. It was a shame, though, to deface girls' arms in such a way. There would be too much leisure to repent—a whole lifetime perhaps. What is worse, the picture is only clear for a year or so, and then blurs to an ugly smudge and a discoloration. However, in defence I must add a note. When I returned to Russia after the pilgrimage, and was telling an old Armenian woman of my experiences, she turned on me with a—

"Show me the picture on your arm."

I could show her none, of course.

She looked at me with doubt and incredulity. She wasn't going to believe I had been to Jerusalem unless I had got the word branded on my arm.

Philip told me in confidence that he was going to pay a doctor five roubles some day to clear his arm of his own old tattoo marks. He thought it bad to be marked for life with a smudge, but he took the women all the same. I didn't see much of Philip in Holy Week except when he came past me with his sacks of purchases—he was a busy man.

Of course commercial Jerusalem grew happier and happier as the city filled, and the final orgy of keepsake-buying grew to a climax. The shops were crushed from morning till night.

A new feature in the hostelry life was the appearance of rows of sacred pictures, gigantic bead-embroidered Madonnas as big as house doors, and sold with packing cases all ready for transmission on board. These almost life-sized representations of the Virgin might have been thought to do some shame to the sacred womanhood, but I did not hear any objection on the part of the pilgrims. The pictures were designed as gifts for village churches, and were too big to accommodate in shops. One peasant woman took one on trust, and sat beside it all Holy Week begging money to pay for it. By Good Friday she had obtained the price, and it was packed in her name for her little village away in Penza province. To-day, no doubt, it looks out from a wall of her village church, and she regards it with pride. She paid a lot for it, too, I suppose; the pilgrims pay heavily for all the little things they want. Some would say they are swindled. But pilgrims never do anything but gain by sacred things. As Yevgeny said to me one day, pointing to a crowd of hawkers and pilgrims, "Look at our peasants ransoming the crosses and the holy things from the Jews and the infidel."

If the Arabs were busy in the streets the commercial monks were busy in the courts of temples,

playing their old shabby game of blessing selling. Whenever the keeper of the hostelry wasn't looking, in popped an austere looking Greek monk with a brief-case and a bag in his arms. One came up to me on the Tuesday afternoon.

"You have a list of souls from Russia, no doubt," said he. "Give it to me and let our brotherhood pray for them. So you will enable us to build our monastery of St. Joachim in the Desert."

"No souls," said I lazily, handing him a piastre, for I knew it was money he wanted.

"Why so little?" said he in an authoritative, angry tone like a Russian official to a peasant. "That is not enough. Give me more!"

I put out my hand and took the piastre back laconically.

He waited.

I turned to something else. When I turned back he was still standing waiting, so I asked him what more he wanted.

"The money," said he, painedly.

"But you didn't want it," said I. "You gave it me back."

"Give me the piastre," said he.

"Oh no," said I, "it's too little for you. You don't get it from me now. I'll keep my piastre for something else."

At this moment he caught sight of the keeper, and bobbed round a corner very unceremoniously and disappeared.

'On Holy Thursday, at the Grave, when the Patriarch washed the feet of twelve of his clergy, a number of pilgrims were put into good places, and they looked on happily and simply, and enjoyed the spectacle, crossing themselves and praising God. What was their astonishment when after the service they were confronted by a military-looking Greek monk who suddenly called out, "Get your money ready." Poor mouzhiks, they had each to pay a rouble for a compulsory blessing. I heard that nothing less than a rouble would be taken, but I suppose in some cases the monk took less, for "ye canna tak' the breeks off a Hielander." It is a good arrangement of the Palestine Society, that ten shilling deduction which is made from the pilgrim's money on the day of arrival in Jerusalem, and paid to him on the day when he departs. But for that the poor peasants had surely finished up destitute.

There was plenty of incident in the too-full hostelries during Holy Week. On Tuesday night a great stir was caused by a madman running about in his shirt and bellowing. This strange fellow was a penniless, one-eyed beggar who had begged his way from his native village. At Jerusalem he had not a halfpenny, and he was allowed to sweep the floors of our hostelry for his keep. We were all wakened up by his strange lapse and the overseer was brought; the old man was captured and prevailed upon to lie down again and sleep. As I had been wakened up I came round and sat with the overseer

THE VIRGIN'S TOMB.

Where dear old Dyadya spent a night and felt that he was covered by her veil.

by the old fellow's bench. He was evidently anxious as to what the madman might do next. He thought such characters should not be allowed in the hostelries; they were thought holy in their native Russian villages and did no harm, but here under the influence of Jerusalem excitement who could tell what might happen? No, he didn't believe that the old man was poor. He might easily be frightfully rich. "They are all gatherers and misers, that sort," said he. "Last year just such an one died in one of the small rooms. She had locked herself in and no one could get to her for a long time. When the door was forced the *baba* was found dead. She had died of starvation. And of how much money do you think she died possessed? You'd never guess . . . five thousand piastres. There was a whole pailful of Turkish ha'pennies alone."

One morning a very queer character showed himself in the hostelry and began a propaganda. He averred that after a year and a half's meditation he had been received into heaven for twenty-four hours, and conducted through its wonders by an angel-officer, who told him many things that were wrong on earth and bade him set them right. He was a short peasant of middle age, rather stupid-looking, but having a nervous affection that caused all his features to jump and twinkle as he spoke.

I heard him saying, "Ah, then the angel-officer took me into a garden of heaven where were all the souls of children under six years old, a garden full of

green apples and little birdikins." When I came up to listen he stopped in his harangue and pounced upon my hand. There was a ring on my fourth finger.

"Take off that ring," said he, "and put it on the middle finger; it is mortal sin to have it on the fourth. So the angel-officer (*augelsky chin*) instructed me."

Several peasants objected, saying that the third finger was one of those used for crossing, and must not be encumbered by earthly vanity. The old man was obstinate, however, and insisted that he had a newer revelation than they, the angel-officer having mentioned that point particularly. The ring was very tight on my finger and could only be removed with great difficulty, so I did not take the prophet's advice. He offered to bless my third finger specially if I felt any qualms, so I was obliged to explain that the ring wouldn't come off. That rather floored him. The angel-officer hadn't provided for the eventuality.

There were quite a crowd of pilgrims round about the prophet, some believing, others doubting, a few trying to explain that the prophet meant he had had a trance and seen a vision. The little old fellow, who protested the truth of his experience and the genuineness of his mission, was rather a queer specimen of Russian humanity. It could not be said he was mad, and though he never looked anybody in the face I scarcely think he intended to

deceive. Like old Abraham he had a grandmotherly voice—a tone explained, perhaps, in the Russian phrase, "Stupid to the point of sanctity." He was much pleased to have listeners, and vexed when any went away quickly. He continuously adjured the pilgrims to give ear attentively and take his words to heart. Every now and then he would buttonhole a promising looking disciple and address him in honeyed accents—

"'The angel-officer showed me how to pray thus: 'Jesus, Son of God, have mercy; Jesus, Son of God, have mercy; Jesus, Son of God, have mercy . . .' The angel-officer told me the praying beads may be abolished; the prayers can be counted just as well on the fingers."

He began praying on his fingers with great celerity. "Five hundred," said he, "is a perfect prayer." The pilgrims fell out with him because he left out the words "us sinners." They declared that the prayer should run, "Jesus, Son of God, have mercy upon us sinners," and that the omission was not orthodox. They suspected him of being a Molokan sectarian and were quite angry.

The prophet changed the subject.

"People should not go so often to church, but should do more good works instead. We should have more mercy. We should not condemn drowners, stiflers, non-communicants, wizards. Especially, you dear *babi*, do not condemn wanderers and strange persons in rags. The angel-officer

told me how you can save your house from evil spirits without being inhospitable. Before you light the fire in the morning cross the stove with the sign of the cross; before you go to bed at night cross all the doors and all the windows . . . in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. When you boil potatoes cross the saucepan and put the potatoes in three at a time. When the potatoes are done, cross the pot again, and take them out three at a time."

"But when you take them out they are hot," objected a *baba*. But the man from heaven was equal to all such objections.

As Philip with a sack on his back shouldered his way through the crowd, I asked him what he thought of the prophet. "On ne khoroshi," said he, "no good. He is a monk who has had his hair cut off. He will make a collection and to-night get drunk."

However, Philip himself had partaken plentifully enough of wine, at least one day recently, and had slept like a log all through the festivities of Palm Sunday.

To be drunk in Holy Week at Jerusalem was counted terrible sin, and I must say that though many of the peasants were heavy vodka drinkers, there was very little drinking noticeable all the time of Lent. On Palm Sunday, day of relaxation, I saw the only drunken man before Easter Day. He was bawling nonsense at one end of the hostelry,

and I went along to him, sat beside him and stared in his face teasingly. He was talking disconnectedly and absurdly of the saints, and did not notice my stare for some seconds. When he became aware of it he seemed troubled and asked me what I wanted. I continued to stare without saying a word. Then, to my astonishment, the old fellow dropped down on his knees in front of me, and with tears in his eyes begged my forgiveness for his sin.

Arab women found their way into the hostelry in Holy Week despite the regulations, and sold bottles of spirits to the peasants, bottles of gin and cognac in preparation for the festivities of Easter day. Much liquor was bought and put solemnly away, covered up and out of sight, till the fast was over.

Another feature of the hostelries at this time was the reinforcement of the beggar army. We were infested with holy beggars—orthodox Arabs and Syrians crossing themselves, pattering Russian and showing their sores. Their clamour at dawn when the pilgrims were in great numbers in the hostelry yard was astonishing. They behaved very differently from the beggars the Russian loves to encourage at home. The true Russian beggars never tyrannise over passers-by, but the Arab is a regular parasite. All the time he begs he hates you; and whilst you give he despises you.

Two of the most interesting beggars in the hostelry yard were a well-dressed dwarf and an

erratically wandering blind man. The dwarf obtained an extraordinary amount of money. All the peasant women had pity on him. "How could such a little man live!" they asked, and they gave him alms with conviction. Not only did they give him *grosch*, but they brought their crusts of bread for him also. The wily Syrian never refused anything, though, of course, he had no use for hard black bread going mouldy.

The blind man was always walking irrelevantly, and calling out at random even when there were no passers-by. He had a rasping voice, and he cried in an abrupt staccato—

"Krista raddy! Krista raddy!" a making Syrian of the beautiful Russian cry, "*Radi Khrista*" ("For Christ's sake").

One morning a silly old *baba* brought to the neat little simpering dwarf a whole armful of bad cabbage leaves, yellow and wilted. I watched the beggar receive them and thank her, crossing himself and thanking God. The *baba* went and the dwarf remained with a contemptuous expression in his eyes. In his arms was this unpleasant encumbrance of cabbage leaves. Suddenly he had a happy thought. The poor old blind man was just walking into the church wall, and calling out as ever, "Krista raddy! Krista raddy!" though no one was near. The dwarf tripped over to him very solemnly and deposited all the cabbage leaves in his arms.

"*Spasebo Tebye Gospody! Spasebo Tebye*

WASHING SHIRTS IN THE HOSTELRY YARD AT A FARTHING APIECE.

Gospody!" said the blind man ecstatically, for he knew not what he was receiving. Meanwhile the artful dwarf tripped back to his place by the main stream of passengers.

The dwarf and the blind man were gentle beggars; it must be said they were angels beside the majority of Easterns. Fortunately no Arab beggars were allowed inside the dormitories of the pilgrims. There a different sort of beggar obtained. Every morning good women came with sacks asking for any crusts we could spare to give to the destitute and the starving. Then also at dawn poor old *babas* came and begged to wash our shirts for us at a farthing apiece. Farthings meant much to them, and for our part Easter was coming on, and all our linen must be clean on the night of going to communion. In the yard on Tuesday and Wednesday might be seen scores of women with tubs full of soap-suds and washing, and on lines joined from roof to roof and coping to coping, long strings of shirts of all imaginable hues.

VII

THE PILGRIMAGE CONCLUDED

I

COMMUNION

On Wednesday evening many of the pilgrims went to the monastery of St. Constantine and St. Helena to take part in the consecration of the holy oil. On Holy Thursday, the day of their Easter communion, the pilgrims went and wept at Gethsemane, and followed down the road by which the soldiers led Jesus to the house of the high priest Annas. From the house of Annas they went across the way to the house of Caiaphas. It is near Sion, and an Armenian monastery is built there now. In the court of the monastery the pilgrims showed one another the vine which grows on the spot where St. Peter denied Christ, and then they went along the right hand side of Sion to the cave where the apostle wept bitterly. Many of us went once more to the Prætorium and the Church of Christ's torments, and saw where the Saviour was scourged, where He was arrayed in purple and crowned with thorns.

At five o'clock in the afternoon the Patriarch left the patriarchate in solemn state and came to the

crowded Sepulchre, kissed the Stone of the Anointing and the Sacred Tomb, and then mounting to his throne in the Church of the Resurrection, blessed the people of the Christian world gathered there—north, south, east, and west. The great service of Christ's sufferings commenced. A deacon was blessed by the Patriarch and began reading a psalm, whilst another consecrated the church with incense. The church was full of bishops and archbishops and priests, who, after the Patriarch had read the first of the "Twelve Gospels," took it in turn to read the others, in all the languages of the East—Greek, Slavonic, Turkish, Roumanian, etc., etc. Two deacons brought vestments for the Patriarch, two others brought double and treble branched candlesticks with candles burning, and two more brought the Bible, which they held in their hands as in some Anglican churches, and the Patriarch read, standing on his throne. When he had finished he stepped down with gold-chained censer and sanctified the Sepulchre and the people with incense.

There were many Russians at the Church of the Sepulchre, but more Greeks and Syrians and Arabs. The peasants preferred to take the communion service at the Russian Cathedral where the clergy all spoke Russian, and everything was done in a language comprehensible to them. In the old days the service took place with greatest pomp at Sion, and the True Cross, with an extraordinary representation of the bleeding and suffering Jesus, was set up

in the church. But for convenience the Greek clergy have centralised everything at the Sepulchre. They have made of it a church that can be used for any purpose and on any day, instead of reserving to it its especial significance and function. In doing this they have erred in instinct or have been betrayed by cupidity. The whole orthodox idea of the special sacredness of special places tends to be lost by this barbarism. Perhaps all will be put right some day. Already there is a strong feeling of difference in the Russian branch of the Greek Church. Russian Christianity is living and growing whilst that of the Greeks is dying and corrupting. The Greek clergy do not recognise that fact; the contempt which they mete out equally to their own Greek peasants and to the Russian peasants is quite absurd in the latter case. The Russians have superstition, they are simple, they can be deceived, but they have life, they have some individual and real revelation which came, not as spoon meat from an idle priest, but as vision from the Living God. If the Russian nation continues on the upgrade in the Powers of Europe the Sepulchre may fall into their hands, and indeed all the power of ministration at the shrines of Palestine. From the point of view of Christianity such a change would benefit every one.

All the pilgrims I knew, even commercial Philip, even many of the feeble people in the hospital, communicated on Thursday night, on the very day of the year and at the very Jerusalem where the

beautiful rite of communion was given first of all. To the peasants this service had a great significance; they felt in a more real and mysterious way their oneness in Christ, the mystic felt the transubstantiation of the elements more vitally, the superstitious more materially and awfully. Greatest of all religious treasure brought from Jerusalem they accounted the fair white loaves which were blessed on the Eve of Good Friday and returned to them on the morrow.

THE ARMENIAN GRANDMOTHER WHO ASKED ME IF I HAD THE TATTOO MARK ON MY ARM.

II

BRINGING OUT THE HOLY SHROUD

On Good Friday in the outer Jerusalem world began the hurly burly of Easter. In the hearts of individual pilgrims were holiness and peace, but in the life of the thousands trooping the cobbled streets began clamour and confusion without remission. The noisy have it all their own way in this world, a hundred noisy ones in a quiet city make a city noisy, and here at Jerusalem those of noisy soul numbered thousands rather than hundreds. The simple peasants were called upon to live a life of complete ecstasy in the heart and uttermost confusion in the mind. Nominally the pilgrims were to go to high vespers at 2 P.M., to the all night service at 8.30 P.M., to the receiving of the Sacred Fire at noon on Saturday, and to the Easter Vespers on Saturday night, but many a mouzhik set out on Friday afternoon for the Life-giving Grave, and was completely lost, not only to the rest of us, but to himself, wedged in the crowd of all the nations at the Sepulchre. Others with express purpose took up their stand in the great church, intending to

remain all the time. For all, except those long familiar with the ritual, the services were more mysterious than intelligible. It was rather hard on those who wished to be at Golgotha on Good Friday, to put their fingers in the holes in the cross where the nails had been, to kiss the flower-strewn shroud, to see the fire actually burst forth out of the rock on Saturday, and to see the Patriarch when he came forth on Easter night telling the world that Christ had risen indeed. So great was the crowd of pilgrims, and so uproarious the more Eastern of them, that the priests themselves were unable to fulfil all the prescribed rites. Much that can be seen at the ordinary churches of Greek Christianity was necessarily omitted owing to the crush and the readiness of the Turkish troops to fire on the people at the least provocation. But perhaps it was only a rumour that parts of the service had been omitted; there were hundreds of short little men and women wedged in the crowd for whom all might have been omitted, and they would have been just as wise. If these did not grumble they led a life of faith.

At nine o'clock on Good Friday began the reading of the Great Hours, and at two in the afternoon High Vespers commenced. The Church of the Life-giving Grave was crammed to the desperation point with pilgrims who had taken up the places which they did not intend to forsake till the fire burst forth on Saturday afternoon. I found a position near the Stone of Anointing, now richly

draped and adorned, and if I did not see all that the purple robed clergy accomplished I could at least console myself with the thought that I had friends in every part of the cathedral, each seeing the ritual from a different point of advantage or disadvantage.

We heard the sonorous chiming of the bells and the sweet singing of the choristers, breathed the incense, and sang the alleluias and amens, and calls for mercy, and we tried to cross ourselves at the appropriate points. Many men and women got down on their knees despite the crush, and remained down among other people's legs abasing themselves and praying with intense fervency.

The service was but a preliminary one, and we were left to push and jostle one another till half-past eight. All the Easterns began to shout and sing, and try to make elbow room, with such clamour that it might have been a town hall mob waiting for an election result rather than the worshippers at the Holy of Holies. The Russians, however, stood motionless and taciturn. They knew how to wait, to be silent, and endure.

There was a hush when the clergy reappeared, and I shall never forget the thrilling strangeness of the scene, the sea of white faces like those of so many corpses risen from the dead, the dim light of many coloured lamps and innumerable candles, the extraordinary melody and mystery of the chiming of the bells above us. When the crowd ceased to talk

and shout, to listen to the bells, it was as if we strained our ears for intelligence of heaven.

The service went forward in pomp and order, a labyrinthine procession with the swaying of censers, stately movements of the priests and the monks, blasts of heavenly singing from the choir, and sepulchral pronouncements in unearthly voices from the priests. Two by two we saw the archimandrites, the priests and the deacons, and indeed all the lower clergy, go up to the Patriarch to receive his blessing before putting on their processional robes of velvet. We saw the deacons robing the Patriarch himself, and the whisper went round that the Sacred Shroud would now be taken in procession.

The clergy began to issue into the body of the church, three hundred of them with crosses and banners, silver clubs, candles, heavily bound Gospels. The Patriarch came forth carrying the Gospels in one hand and his staff in the other, and two deacons waved incense toward him unceasingly. From the choir in the gallery above and from many pilgrims came a sweet volume of song.

After slowly circling the ark of the Grave the Patriarch and his clergy mounted to Golgotha, where on a table under the place where our Lord was crucified, lay a shroud of white hand-spun linen, embroidered in many coloured silks with a representation of Jesus lying in the Sepulchre. The shroud was also covered with freshly picked flowers that had been scattered upon it by the monks, and

CHURCH OF THE LIFE-GIVING GRAVE: THE ENTRANCE TO THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

which would be scrambled for later on by the crowd eager to take home tokens of almost miraculous power.

As the procession came up, those who had Gospels placed them on the shroud, and then the Patriarch read the last chapters of St. Matthew. A prayer was said for the various orthodox kings, and the choir began singing an oft-repeated "O Lord have mercy."

"From Golgotha the procession came down to the Stone of Anointing, and I saw four bishops carrying in their right hands Bibles and lighted candles, and in their left hands the precious shroud full of flowers. They held the shroud by tassels, and carried it three times round the Stone before placing it finally upon it. For the pilgrim in his heart it was Jesus Himself that the flowers symbolised, Jesus taken down from the cross, and now to be buried in the Sepulchre. When the priests sprayed rose water upon it and poured sweet-smelling ointments, it was as if the body of Jesus were being again anointed.

What a crush there was about the Stone! We could scarcely breathe. I heard several gasps and cries from old folk injured in the press.

Here at the Stone was a further reading of the Gospel, prayers, the singing of canticles, and a short but simple sermon, to the effect that Christ had suffered for our sins and that His precious body had been anointed with sweet oil and wrapped in fair linen. The sermon ended, the shroud was

upborne once more and carried in procession three times round the ark of the Grave. The same four bishops then carried it into the sacred interior and placed it in the hollow of the rock where originally Jesus' body was laid.

When the bishops came out once more the Patriarch, taking a censer in his right hand, himself entered and began a lamentation in a loud and trembling bass. It was the signal for great emotion throughout the church, cries in all languages, moans, shouts. Then the Patriarch came out again, and in clouds of incense swung his censer toward the worshippers and marched round the ark once more.

Sermons and prayers followed in various languages and much wonderful singing. Then all the clergy went in to do homage at the Sepulchre, all in their rich purples, with their pale strange faces, and with their long hair hanging over their shoulders. Their aspect was what might have been a dream of Jesus sleeping in the grave.

When all had kissed the shroud and come out again there was a prolonged singing of canticles. The lights in the ark were put out and the doors closed. A Turk was given wax, and the lock was sealed with four seals, and an Arab soldier with a gun was put on guard at the entrance.

At three o'clock at night the service ended; the clergy were disrobed, and the lights were put out. Great gloom enveloped the church, a gloom only

intensified by the smoky lights of the many tallow candles in the hands of the pilgrims and the church servants. The inferno of noise re-asserted itself, to continue without interruption till two o'clock in the afternoon.

III

THE SACRED FIRE

THE receiving of the Sacred Fire is not primarily an object of Russian pilgrimage. For the Greeks and the Orthodox Arabs and Syrians it is the crown of the pilgrimage, but the Russians are often advised by their priests to regard the ceremony as unimportant. It certainly is not biblical, it is not an emblem of Christ's life upon the world. It is something accidental and additional, a heritage of paganism, and a mountain of superstition.

In the first century of Christianity the Patriarch Narcissus, finding the lamps in the Sepulchre short of oil, went to the brook of Siloam for water and filled the vessels of the church therewith. Fire came down from heaven and ignited the water so that it burned like oil, and the illumination lasted throughout the Easter service. Every Easter Saturday since then fire has appeared from heaven at the Sepulchre.

The miracle is not a new conception. In the Old Testament days fire came down from heaven and consumed the agreeable sacrifice. The Sacred

Fire of Holy Saturday is sent by God as a sign that the sacrifice of His Son has been acceptable to Him. Perhaps in its origin the miracle was a way for the Fire-worshippers to pass over into Christianity without shock. It is even to-day a great pagan festival, and there are as many Moslems as Christians eager to light their lamps and candles from it on Holy Saturday afternoon.

Every Jerusalem Moslem believes in the Holy Fire—it is the angel of his home; he lights the fire on his hearth from it and believes that it gives him fortune. Jerusalem in a strange way identifies its prosperity with the miracles of the Sacred Fire, and its inhabitants know that but for the influx of visitors to see it from all the country round, and from even the ends of the earth, they would all be much poorer.

I have said that the Russians rather slighted it, but that does not mean that many did not regard it as an extraordinary wonder, a miracle absolutely authenticated.

I had a long talk with Liubomudrof. He held that the Sacred Fire breaking out was the sign sent from God that out of death would spring life, that Jesus had died, but that He would conquer death. I held that the priests produced the fire chemically, and that they understood it as a symbol and a rite.

"That is worldly wisdom," said he in his oracular way, "the cunning deceive, and the simple are deceived. There are, I know, frauds, priestly sleight-of-hand, juggling tricks worked by

the devil and exposed by man. Who is there to believe? What is there to believe? There used to be faith by which mountains could be removed, but the only person who had faith enough to do it was the devil, and he is always doing it. But I have always understood that at the Sepulchre on Holy Saturday God gave a palpable sign. Though all other miracles were frauds, inventions, sleight-of-hand, yet the Sacred Fire was a heavenly manifestation on earth."

I tried to point out that all events were really miracles, therefore full of mystery. That our life was nothing but miracles, that we were borne up on miracles like a ship on the waves of the sea, but that did not please the Comic at all. He was out to see a definitely explained infraction of the harmony of nature, a real impinging of the after life upon the present life, heaven upon earth, and he had in readiness a lamp with two wicks which he intended to light with "the light that never was on sea or land," and take back to Russia to his cottage and his church.

Before leaving Jerusalem I gave to Liubomudrof as a parting gift a little Gospel, and I wrote within it the aphorism, "True Religion takes its rise out of Mystery, and not out of Miracle." In Liubomudrof's ever-revolving whimsical mind such a thought might well find ground to grow and blossom. In it lies salvation in the hour of doubt.

The Church of the Sepulchre, of Golgotha, and of the Resurrection, was crowded even to the point of sacrilege, and a little army of Turkish soldiers forced the crowd back, and kept space for the Patriarch and his clergy taking the service. Practically every pilgrim in Jerusalem was standing somewhere either without or within, and some were waiting in quieter corners even a few streets off looking towards the Sepulchre, and feeling that though they saw nothing, yet they were taking part and were actually present. All had their candles ready to light when others more fortunate should burst out of the crowd carrying the sacred flames. Many had the lanterns in which were enshrined little ikons and lamps. These lanterns, with lamps lit from the Sacred Fire, the peasants hoped to preserve till they got back to Russia, to carry in their hands even as they walked from Odessa home, and to treasure as they would the water of life or the philosopher's stone. Alas! it was often a difficult matter keeping the lamp a-burning all the way, through rain and tempest, and through stress of circumstances on the road. Some Russian writer will perhaps collect one day stories of the adventures of the Sacred Fire; it would be a piece of national literature.

About two o'clock in the afternoon the shouts and shrieks of the worshippers were hushed at the appearance of the Patriarch and his clergy and the commencement of the great litany. The Patriarch,

twelve archimandrites, and four deacons were all dressed publicly in shining white by the servants of the church. That done a procession formed of surpliced clergy carrying banners depicting Christ's sufferings, His crucifixion, burial, and glorious resurrection. These clergy walked in pairs, and after them also in pairs came others carrying wonder-working crosses, then appeared a great number of clergy in pairs, many of them carrying sheaves of candles (thirty-three candles in a sheaf, one for each year of the life of Jesus). Directly the Sacred Fire appeared the clergy would light their sheaves of candles and distribute them to the pilgrims. Behind all came the Patriarch carrying his staff. Three times they went round the ark of the Grave with hymns, and then standing outside the door of the Sepulchre the Patriarch took off his mitre and all the emblems of his earthly glory before entering. A dragoman broke the seals with which the door of the Sepulchre was sealed and the Patriarch was allowed to go in. Before entering deacons gave him armfuls of candles to light when the fire should appear.

The disrobing of the Patriarch before his entrance to the shrine of shrines is by way of protestation that he takes no chemicals—or at least the simple understand it so. He went into the chamber in a state as near to nakedness as decency permitted, and when he had entered, the door was immediately shut upon him again. The throbbing

multitude was filled with a strange silence, and the minds of many people occupied with conjectures as to what was happening in the Holy of holies into which the Patriarch had disappeared, and from which in a short while would appear the sign from heaven, the one slender sign for them of God's interference in a prosaic world.

The suspense was awful, the outbreak of the heavy bells above us something unearthly. Every neck was craned just as every limb was squeezed and crushed in the great "passion towards the Sepulchre." In those minutes of "God's hesitation" there passed in the minds of the believers ages of exaltation mingled with doubt.

At last from the wall of the north side of the Ark of the Grave burst a great blaze of yellow light illumining the heads of the throng, and spreading with strange rapidity, as candle was passed to candle. From the interior of the ark sheaves of candles all lighted were handed out by the Patriarch, the sheaves having, as I said, thirty-three candles in each—the years of Jesus' life. Quick as thought the years and candles were distributed, clutched, hung overhead on ribbons, dropped to the close wedged crowd. On our faces and our clothes hot wax kept dropping, and now and then flames singed our ears. "Never mind," said one pilgrim to me, "the sacred fire cannot hurt any one for the first half-hour after it has come." Exalted Easterners took whole sheaves of lighted candles and plunged

them into their bosoms to extinguish them; many wilfully applied the flames to their bare flesh and cried out in joy and ecstasy. Hundreds of pilgrims produced their black death-caps filled with sweet scented cotton-wool, and they extinguished the candles in them. These death-caps embroidered with bright silver crosses they proposed to keep to their death days and wear in the grave, cotton-wool and all. Other pilgrims carefully preserved their Sacred Fire, and getting out of the mob as quickly as they could carried it to the hostelry, protecting it from the wind with their open palms. Others, more provident, lit the wicks in their double lanterns.

As for the crowd, as a crowd it was to all appearance mad with ecstasy as if under the influence of some extraordinary drug or charm. The people shouted, yelled, sang, danced, fought, with such diversity of manner and object, and in such a variety of dress and language, that the calm onlooker thought of the tale full of sound and fury told by an idiot and signifying nothing. There was one guiding cry, however, that one taken seemingly from the lips of the Patriarch, and repeated in every language of the Orthodox East,—Kyrie eleison, Christos Voskrece, Christ is risen, and as on Easter Eve in Russia the happy Slavs kissed one another in rapture, finding themselves once more in the moment of revelation brothers and sisters in Christ and full of love for one another.

CARRYING THE SACRED FIRE IN A HOLY LANTERN.

The pilgrims try to keep the fire alight till they get back to their villages in Russia. Then they light candles with it, before the ikons in their houses and in the churches.

It was the trial of their lives for the little khaki-clad Turkish soldiers, and it seemed to me from what I heard that they failed to keep the crowd back. When the Patriarch appeared to bless the people there was a regular stampede towards him, and despite the whir and crack of whips, and ungentle pounding from butt ends of rifles, the orthodox Arabs burst through, and picking up the frail little greybeard of a Patriarch carried him in triumph to the altar. The crowd, however, began to move out, and few of us had any choice of road; we just walked in the direction in which we were pushed. I for my part was very glad to reach the hostelry again.

IV

EASTER

"WHEN are you going home?" was the commonest whisper in the hostelries on the afternoon of Holy Saturday. "On the first boat I can," was the commonest reply. The Consul was besieged by pilgrims asking leave to start on the morrow, and the general office of the Palestine Society was filled with pilgrims seeking to take out the ten shillings deposited against their homeward journey.

The streets and the shops were packed with peasants buying keepsakes, ikons, and memorials to take with them home to their native villages. On Holy Saturday, and indeed throughout Holy Week, the owners of trunk shops did a great trade, and many were the newly varnished cedar trunks that appeared in the hostelry, holy trunks which were taken to the priests to receive blessing, and on which was written in big letters, "With the Benediction of the Holy City of Jerusalem." Since the peasants could not write, a great sale was done in ready-written letters which would do to send to any friend in Russia, letters full of high-sounding phrases and

pious opinions all written with superb flourishes of caligraphy in gold-coloured ink. Many thousands of such letters were posted in Jerusalem at Easter, but, I fear, very few reached their destination. At least I sent one of them to a friend of mine in Russia and it never arrived there. I rather suspect that as many addresses were indecipherable, some one in charge got rather a fever for gleaning unused stamps, but perhaps in this I am uncharitable.

For the rest the pilgrims filled their cedar chests with the most interesting holy ware,—death-caps, shrouds, rizas, myrrh, frankincense, baptism crosses, thorn-crowns, little pictures of sacred places, panoramas, stereoscopes, pictures of the Mother and Child cut on tablets of mother-of-pearl, pictures of the Crucified One cut on little wooden crosses, cakes of Bethlehem clay, paper bags full of Jerusalem earth, other bags containing lumps of Aceldama, bottles of holy water, Jordan water, Galilee water, bottles of specially prepared holy oil to be used to burn before the ikon at home, pillow-cases full of sweet-smelling herbs of miraculous healing power, sheaves of olive branches, cedar branches and palms, bunches of withered flowers from Bethany and Nazareth. There were praying-beads in multifarious variety, rosaries of ebony, of cedar, of imitation amber, and of vulcanite, of bright china or glass, even of olives that had been taken from Jerusalem trees and dried. There were ikons in plenty, large and small, representations of the saints in gilt frames,

pictures from the Bible story and from the lives of the Fathers, pictures of the great shrines. Every pilgrim took pictures back to Russia to put up on his cottage walls—pictures are very precious to those who cannot read.

As I said, the vendors of all "holy" wares did a lively trade this week, but as Easter day approached, and the breaking of the Great Fast into rejoicing and festivity, a new type of hawker appeared in the streets and in the purlieus of the hostelry—the Arab peasant woman with chickens for sale and the wily Turk with bottles of brandy. There was more *arakha*[1] sold in Jerusalem on Holy Saturday than in the rest of Lent put together. And the pilgrims demanded it. I noticed an old stalwart being pestered by a Turkish delight man as we came from the receiving of the Sacred Fire.

"That's all right," said he, "tasty, no doubt, but *arakeetchka*, have you got a bottle of arakeetchka? No? Akh then, away with you!"

The pilgrim waved his hand in disgust.

Of course scarlet pace-eggs appeared everywhere; and the pilgrims told one another the story of how St. Mary Magdalene, being too poor to make a rich present to the Emperor Tiberius, took him a red varnished egg, saying, "Christ is risen," an act which so astonished the monarch that he ceased persecuting the Christians, and ordered Christ to be numbered among the gods. At the Sepulchre we all saw the

[1] Turkish vodka.

picture of St. Mary Magdalene offering the egg to Tiberius, and it gave a new reality to the custom of the Russians of giving one another blood-red eggs on Easter day, saying to one another the while, "Christ is risen!"

I saw that many pilgrims took as many as a dozen eggs, which they proposed to give to their home folk when they got back to Russia. Some packed the eggs carefully with paper in boxes, others put them in a bag at the bottom of their sacks—alas!

On Saturday also appeared the Easter cakes, almost as in Russia, cakes which were taken to church to be blessed, and in which lighted candles were stuck. All pilgrims had *kulitch* and *paskha* as in Russia, even the poorest, and of course they laid aside bits to take home also. Then many bought baskets of Jaffa oranges, even pedestrian pilgrims, forgetful of the fact that they had at least to carry them from Jerusalem to Jaffa: once on the boat the baskets would speedily be lightened.

All Saturday night the hostelry was like a seething ant-heap, pilgrims going out and coming in with cakes to be blessed, and all manner of Easter purchase. Some heard the Easter service at the Life-giving Grave, and more perhaps at the Russian cathedral. No matter what ordinarily dark and deserted street of the Holy City one traversed, it was on Easter night mysteriously populous. As dear old Dyadya said to me, "Only the Jews are asleep."

At midnight at the Grave the Patriarch, with his priests and twelve surpliced boys carrying candlesticks, moved in solemn procession thrice round the Grave, singing, "Of Thy rising, O Christ our Saviour, the angels in the heavens are singing!" Once more the Ark of the Sepulchre was enveloped in clouds of incense, and a voice came forth to the thousands of pilgrims, "Rejoice! Christ is risen." Then we all sang the famous hymn, *Christos Vorkrece*, and kissed one another. The Patriarch took an arm-chair in the church of the Resurrection, and the worshippers surged towards him to give the Easter kiss.

Then at one in the morning we passed out, and thronged into the Russian cathedral, now joyously illuminated with coloured lights, and we heard the service in familiar church Slavonic. And we all kissed one another again. What embracing and kissing there were this night; smacking of hearty lips and tangling of beards and whiskers! The Russian men kiss one another with far more heartiness than they kiss their women. In the hostelry I watched a couple of ecstatical old greybeards who grasped one another tightly by the shoulders, and kissed at least a score of times, and wouldn't leave off.

When I came into the hostelry about three in the morning there was a savoury smell of cooking, many oil stoves were alight, many benches were spread with meat and wine for the breaking of the

fast. In the refectory the tables had all been spread long since, and priests had sprinkled holy water there, and blessed the Easter meal. Yevgeny took me into the Spiritual Mission, and I found the Easter tables more gloriously heaped up with viands than in the refectory. Every monk or priest I met saluted us with, "Christ is risen!" and we replied, "Yes, He is risen!" and kissed one another. There commenced a day of uproarious festivity. The quantity of wine, of cognac, and arakha consumed at the *Rasgovenie*, the breaking of the fast, would no doubt appal most English. And the drunken dancing and singing would be thought rather foreign to the idea of Jesus. But I don't know. To my eyes it was all an expression of genuine joy, an overflowing of the heart—the true answer to the tidings, "Jesus was dead, but behold He is risen, and is alive for evermore!"

It was a most affecting festival. Never shall I forget the tear-running, exalted faces of the pilgrims I saw at the Sepulchre later in Easter day, bowing themselves once more at the hollow in the rock, and blessing God that they had lived to celebrate Easter at Jerusalem itself. At the thought of all their pilgrimage behind them, and of the glorious Easter morning at last achieved, something melted in the heart of every pilgrim. Their faces caught the radiance of a vision, the gleam which shows itself on the countenance of the dying when they catch a glimpse of something of heaven. In every

man's life there is a melting moment. I imagine that when the prodigal son came in sight of his father's house tears began to trickle down his face, and when he saw his father running to meet him the tears poured down in floods. So is it with the pilgrim.

OUTSIDE THE CATHEDRAL DOOR.

V

THE ARCHIMANDRITE'S FAREWELL

"DEAR compatriots, beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord! Let us give thanks unto the Lord!

"Long did we have the wish to come to this Holy Land and see with our own eyes the places where our Lord Jesus Christ lived and died, the wish of every orthodox Russian Christian. But the way was long and hard, and there were seas to cross, and many of us were so old that we could hardly dare hope to succeed. But see, beyond every expectation and hope we have actually found the Holy Land, have been in Bethlehem where the Child was born, and in Nazareth where He lived thirty years. We have washed our sinful bodies in the holy Jordan streams where He was baptized, have climbed Tabor where He was transfigured, showing His godly glory to His disciples. We have been on Eleon where He was taken up into heaven; we have lived and walked in Jerusalem where He was crucified, buried, and raised from death. The names of the places in which we have prayed have made our very hearts tremble. We

have walked the road that He walked, breathed the same air, looked at the same mountains, hills, valleys, and ravines. We have seen the garden of Gethsemane, where the Lord loved to be alone, and where before His crucifixion He prayed in agony. We have seen where the temple stood, and whence were driven out the money-changers. In a word, we have been to all the sacred places we could find and have prayed in them. We have followed in the footsteps of Jesus Christ from Bethlehem to Golgotha. Great has been the mercy of God, and whilst we yet live we ought constantly to thank Him and pray for those who have helped us on the road. We have had blessing that is denied to many far better than ourselves. And don't forget that to whom much is given of him much is asked. When we go back to Russia we must never forget our visions. Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that from us palmers much more is demanded than from others.

"Do you remember, brothers, that on the way when we had to cross the sea there arose a great storm, and we said to one another that we should never live to pray at the Sepulchre? Well, see God has enabled us to pray at all the Holy Places, to live quite a long time in Jerusalem, and to gather at last to go home again. Glory to God, Glory to God! Blessed is the Lord God of Zion living in Jerusalem!

"It is true that it is partly owing to the fatherly

kindness and care of the gentleman most worthy to honour, our Emperor, that we have been enabled to pilgrimage hither, and also to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth Fedorovna. We must remember that but for their care we might have fared hardly in this land where our tongue is not spoken. This is not hospitable and stranger-loving Russia. Here no one gives anything except for money. Here also are the enemies of Christianity, Mahometans, and Jews, and not only they, but the enemies of Russia, the foreign and unorthodox Christians. God has inspired the Tsar to make a very loving provision and protection for us. So, glory be to God, all is happily ended and we have lived as in a dream. The time comes for us to return home to Mother Russia once again. Let us not forget to pray God earnestly to preserve us from the perils of land and sea.

"One word more, dear brothers and sisters, pilgrims and pilgrimesses! Some of our brothers returning from the Holy Land have thought that they have done all earthly, that they have attained to sainthood, and that nothing more is asked of them below. Please don't act so! Remember what the Lord said: 'So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do' (St. Luke xvii. 10). Let us be humble, counting ourselves the last, the worst of all. Who can say why it was the Lord

God enabled us to pray at holy places? Perhaps it was because we were in such danger of sin, perhaps as a last means of saving us from sloth and wickedness.

"Then again, we have seen much that is evil in the Holy Land. Do not let us, therefore, take home tales of evil things seen and heard there. Forget that which was not good. Do not lie about the sacred places, and don't make up stories and fables. Say only what you yourselves have personally known and felt. Especially must I say to you, dear sisters and pilgrimesses, hold your tongues. In much speaking lies not salvation. How often after we have spoken do we not shed tears and wish we had been silent. And may God of Zion, Maker of heaven and earth, bless you and lead your steps into the way of truth, and enable you to see the blessed Jerusalem, not this earthly, but the heavenly one."

. . . . . .

So the pilgrimage was over, and a new pilgrimage commenced, the 7000 had to make their way home. It was difficult to accommodate more than 1000 on a boat, and so, many pilgrims had to wait a long while. In the interim some went to Nazareth, and others to Egypt and Mount Sinai. Philip was waiting for the third boat, a better one than the others. Liubomudrof went to Mount Sinai on a camel. Father Yevgeny left on the Monday in Easter for Mount Athos. Before taking leave of me he invited me to come and stay with him at the

A PRIEST GIVES HIS BLESSING.

Pantaleimonsky monastery as long as I liked. Dear old Dyadya was taken ill and lay in the hospital on Easter day. I fear that perhaps he died at Jerusalem, and that the cross he bought at Golgotha he could not bring to his village church after all.

I for my part left Jerusalem by train and got on to the first boat, determined to get to Russia before the closing of the seas by war. I left Jerusalem on Easter day, and as few pilgrims cared to do that I had a less troublesome passage than most. Poor other pilgrims! Most of them had to wait a whole month at Mount Athos because of the war. My boat, the *Tsaritsa*, was the last of the Russian vessels to get through the Dardanelles before the Straits were closed. Every one was talking about the war. A monk expressed the opinion to me that there was only one reason for the Turkish-Italian war—the nations were beginning to fall upon one another without cause, in anticipation of the Last Judgment. This year Tsargrad (Constantinople) would fall, as by prediction, Easter and the Feast of the Annunciation coinciding this year; next year by the Dead Sea the dreadful Judgment would take place. I thought how triumphant he would be when the coming eclipse of the sun took place and what the pilgrims would think.

As we neared the straits Italian warships passed us. All day we speculated on our chances of getting back to Russia before a blockade of the Dardanelles. Even the captain was doubtful. Early in the

morning we came to the Hellespont and the faded white and yellow settlement called the port of the Dardanelles. We shut off steam and waited, waited all day, and with us a continually increasing crowd of other vessels—passenger steamers, commercial steamers, a black collier, a deserted-looking German boat heaped up with timber, a sailing vessel from Greece. Hour after hour went past. We heard cannonading behind us, and stared at the horizon vainly trying to understand it. We watched the Turkish soldiers all in khaki marching on the shore from earthwork to earthwork and pictured the ensuing war. At last many soldiers came on board and an officer chatted with the captain. There was a buzz of French all around us and many smiles. We were to be taken through. A pilot came out once more; the waiting vessels, fifteen of them, formed into single file, and in a strange procession followed up the historic strait between seemingly impregnable forts. We were free to go on to Russia . . . and how glad!

We at least kept burning our sacred fire, for we had calm weather, but what of all those other pilgrims who followed us in storm and rain only to find the way barred by war? I searched the columns of Russian newspapers in vain for intelligence of their fate. Alas, few Russians even know that there are pilgrims making this remarkable journey; the papers only recorded the losses of the grain merchants and the shipping companies. But

I heard afterwards the men pilgrims were put ashore at Mount Athos, the women remaining on board, for at the Holy Island nothing female is allowed, not even a hen.

We went on to Odessa over grey seas reflecting grey skies. "I suppose possibly there will be snow in Russia," said a pilgrim to me doubtfully, "there is generally snow at this time of the year though the spring is due."

"We ourselves are carrying the spring," said I, pointing to the swallows which were darting in and out of the cordage.

The pilgrim was affected.

"Where did they come from?" he asked.

"From the south," said I. "They slept on deck last night. Come, I'll show you their little home."

I took him to a coping over a tool-room and wash-house, and there, sure enough, were five or six even now perching delicately and lifting their little tail feathers.

"Travelling *Zaichom* without paying for a ticket," said the pilgrim with a grin.

When we came in sight of Russia the pilgrims lifted their hats and kissed one another again, and sang praises unto the Lord. Then Odessa received us, and when we had passed the Custom-house we went from the dock to the churches to give thanks and receive blessing. We went out into the city, some to the monastery hostelries, others to

beer-houses and restaurants, some started their tramp home to their native villages, others went to the trains. The everyday commenced, full of trivial interest. It was strange to hear people all about us talking of wages and work, and the prices of this and that. We seemed very far away from Jerusalem. We were, indeed, the furthest possible, for we were, I think, just starting on a new pilgrimage and in a new way.

I said Good-bye to them all, and went away to a little town in the Caucasus, to take from Jerusalem a stout little cross for an old grandmother to hold in her hand when the time should come for her to die. She had asked me to bring it for her. And I took her a holy cross-marked pillow-case on which to rest her head at night and give her visions of Jerusalem in her dreams.

THE END

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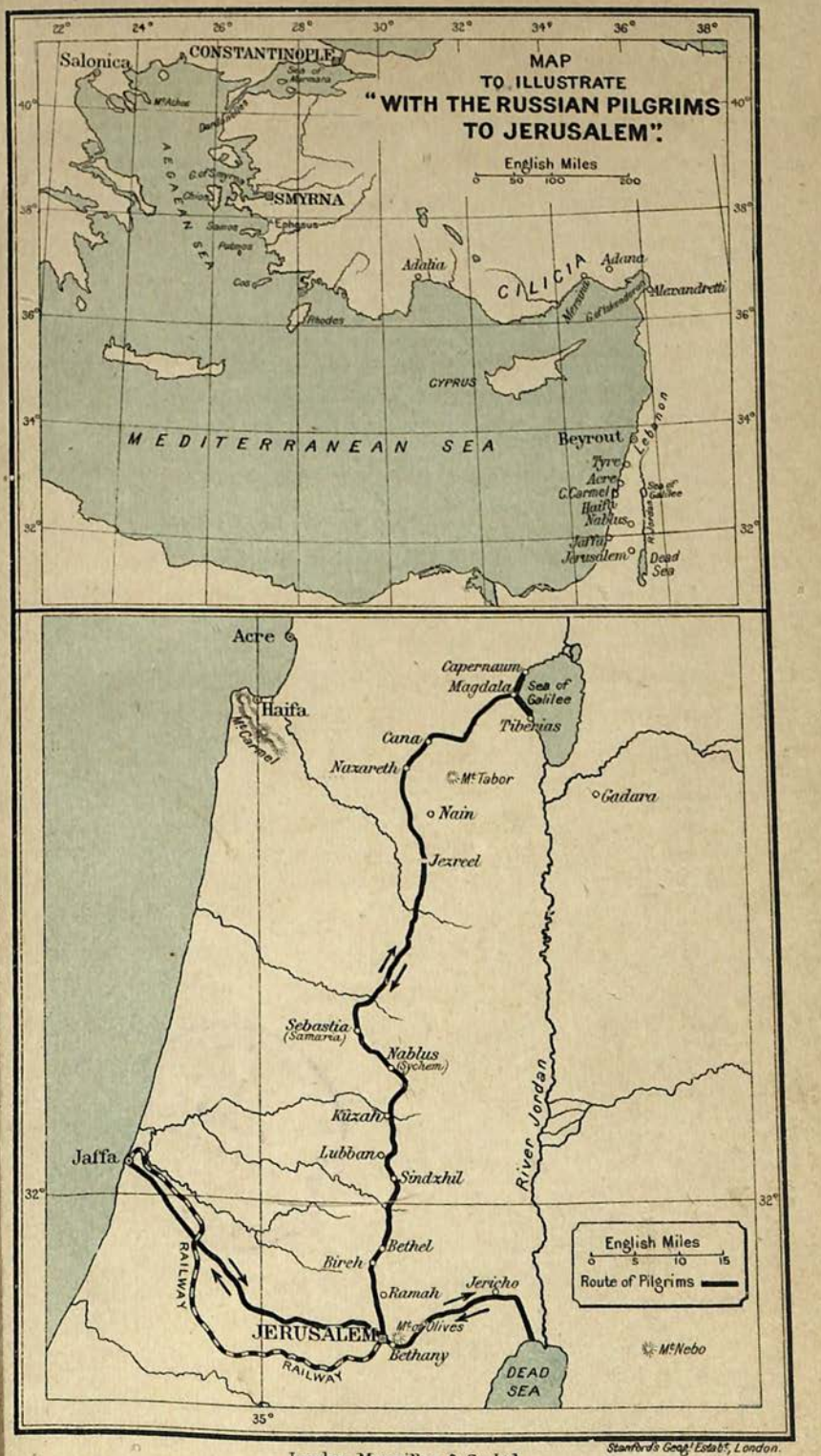

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